



MY PORTRAIT
PAINTED AND PRESENTED TO ME BY PROFESSOR VON HERKOMER, K.A.

RECORDS AND REMINISCENCES

PERSONAL AND GENERAL

BY

SIR FRANCIS C. BURNAND

VOL. I

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS AND
FACSIMILE LETTERS

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A SORT OF APOLOGY

IT has been suggested to me that I should write an "introduction." Formidable affair that. And why? Surely an "introduction" argues both parties unknown to one another, which, as regards the public and this present scribe, is certainly not the case.

Neither upon a short nor upon a long acquaintance would I so far presume as to drop in when not wanted, affecting, after the manner of the very ancient Paul Pry, to "hope I don't intrude." Heaven forbid that I should be so lost to all sense of humour as to take advantage of an amiably disposed public and insist upon "telling them the story of my life." Yet in these "reminiscences," which must of necessity be to a certain extent somewhat egotistical, as being autobiographical, I trust will be found not a little that is interesting or amusing, or both in combination. This concoction of mine I fear is rather a homely brew, and whether the worse or the better for that, it is not for me to decide, but such as it is, with all its demerits, all its imperfections on its head, I place it, diffidently, before my

readers. With the tender-hearted man in Artemus Ward's story, who begged the diggers rough and ready (with the revolver) among the audience at an Arkansas music hall "not to shoot the man at the pianner, as he was doing his best," I address myself to the kind consideration of such among my critics who may be inclined towards severity, and say, "Don't be hard on the scribe; he has tried to do his best."

F. C. B.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I	
About •Stoke Newington, etc., Albion Road, Church Street— Our Family there	28
CHAPTER II	
An Interim Chapter -Ten Minutes Allowed—Discursive—Con- cerning some Music -And Dances -Chatterton, Harpist— Jullien—Polkamaia—Albert Smith - Piatti—Koenig—Abbé Liszt	56
CHAPTER III	
Domestic Matters -Tales of Two Families -Aunts and Uncles - Introductory Studies -Dickens—Drama -Early Tastes Music and Marriage	63
CHAPTER IV	
More Clergy—Father's Friends -Rouse-- Rougement—Bath— School - Master - Misseses-- Illness-- Scene -Brighton— Dombey—Toots—The Rev. Mr. Young—Reading the Lessons—Ancient Farce—Amateur Boys—Sir Martin Archer Shee, P.R.A.—Scott's Novels—Hamilton Woodgate - Light Literature	69

CHAPTER V

PAGE

On the Road to Eton—Durnford—Judy—Novels—Ainsworth— Bulwer Lytton—English Opera—Adelphi Farce—Wright— Paul Bedford—My Extravaganza—Tom Matthews the Clown—English Opera—Harrison—Miss Rainforth—Miss Romer—Charles Mathews—Widdicomb—Madame Vestris —Story of Jones the Painter	89
--	----

CHAPTER VI

Lyceum and Mathews—Prices—Keeleys—Wright—Bedford— Buckstone—Farce—Melodrama—Adelphi—Tilbury's Pol- onius—Dr. Birch—Fast Young Man of Period—Vauxhall Gardens—Cremorne—Celebrities—Concert—Stage Opera —Jullien—Dickens—Albert Smith—Lever	118
---	-----

CHAPTER VII

Eton—Durnford's—Hardships—Early School—Præpostors— Lubbocks—Refreshments—At Joe's—Fagging—Miseries— "Sock-Shops"—Games—"Wet Bobs"—"Dry Bobs"— Sense of Honour—Boating Music—Drawing—Tarver— Evans—The Provost—Bethel—Plumtre—Cokesley— Hawtrej—Strawberry Time—At the Wall—1851—Crystal Palace—Evans's—Imitations at Eton—Cider Cellars Musical Finish	140
---	-----

CHAPTER VIII

Eton—Change of Scene—Durnford's to Cokesley's—Discipline —Tutorial Visits—Smoking—Monsieur Malet—Youthful Author—Two Distinguished Characters—Ajax— <i>Vox Cla- mantis</i> —Explanation	178
---	-----

CHAPTER IX

"So, Uncle, there you are"—Holiday Time—Lola Montez— The Story of the Boot-Hooks—The Prompter—Private Theatricals— <i>Aller et Retour</i> —Mystery Solved	198
---	-----

CONTENTS

ix

CHAPTER X

PAGE

<i>Sic Transit Etona</i> —Illness—Dr. Goodford's Farewell—Interim Vacation Lydia Thompson—Shaw Stewart—In Windsor Park—Rencontre—Duke of Cambridge—From Eton to London—River Trip—An Escape—Among the Camerons—Thompsons in Devonshire—Health and Happiness	215
---	-----

CHAPTER XI

In and about Town—Laura—Thackeray—Cora Pearl—Agnes Willoughby—A Long Drive—Our Sad Experience—Felbrigg Taghoni Carlotta Grist Evans's—Sergeant Ballantine Judge and Jury—Foley Rooms—Other Haunts—Birthday—Up to Trinity—My First Play in Public—The Fitzgeralds—Merry Moments	236
--	-----

CHAPTER XII

An Extinct Race—Upware Republic—Downing College—Peculiar—Wines Theatres—Past and Present—Reference—Dr. Guest—High Churchism—Simeonites—Actors—Horton Rhys—His Company— <i>Absits</i> — <i>Excats</i> —Starting	268
--	-----

CHAPTER XIII

On Tour—Bath Manager—Plymouth—London—Marie Wilton Buckstone—Paddy—A Momentous Interview—Back to Cambridge—Longs and Shorts—Coaching Days—Big Smith—Companions—Ecclesiastical—State of Parties—Arthur Ward—Freemasonry—Sir James Crichton-Browne's Poser—The Master of Trinity and High Churchmen—Bar or Church—Lightfoot—Harold Browne—Advice—Upton Richards—A New Departure—Cuddesdon	286
--	-----

CHAPTER XIV

From Cambridge to Cuddesdon—Liddon—Bishop Wilberforce—Archdeacon Pott—Golightly Trouble—A Vacation Trip—Difficulties—Benson—Cowley—Development—An Oration—A Terrific Scene—Next Morning—Friendly Party—Bishop—Architect	306
---	-----

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XV

PAGE

Among the Oblates—Visiting House—A Scene—A Friend in Need—Interview—Dr. Manning—An Appreciation—Com- panions—A Wonderful Sermon—An Old-World Celebrity— Père Ratisbonne—Another Future Cardinal—The Old School—Father Faber—A Decision—Old Story correctly Re-told—Farewell to St. Mary's	319
--	-----

CHAPTER XVI

Uncertainty—Friends—Edinburgh—Quintin Twiss—Joe Robins —Louise Keeley—Montagu Williams—Mrs. Keeley—Tom Pierce—Fitzgerald—George Meredith—Pater Evans—Duff- Gordons—Fred. Chapman— <i>Once a Week</i> —Charles Keene —Mark Lemon	350
---	-----

CHAPTER XVII

Rest—Novelty—1858—Theatres—Lincoln's Inn—Robson— <i>Medea</i> — <i>Dido</i> —Lacy, Kind and Crafty—My Rights—My Wrongs—Charles Young—Chatterton—Willert—Miss Wyndham—St. James's Theatre—First Night—First Piece —Critics—Marriage—Term-Keeping—H. J. Byron—E. L. Blanchard—Keeley—Montagu Williams—Robson and Emden—Olympic—The Benicia Boy—Feathers in Cap	365
--	-----

CHAPTER XVIII

In Chambers—Bourdillon—A. L. Smith—Alfred Wigan—Miss Herbert— <i>La Dame de St. Tropez</i> —Emery—Dewar—Bel- more—The Old Arundel Club—Some Members—Clerkenwell Sessions—Legal Lights—Montagu Williams—Keeley's Ultimatum—Serjeant Bodkin—Old Bailey—For the Defence —Besley—Last Appearances—Work—Poor Pay—Thomas Knox Holmes—Committee Rooms—Hope Scott—Sam Pope —Richmond	384
---	-----

CONTENTS

xi

CHAPTER XIX

	PAGE.
Young Tom Hood — Saturday Night Contributors — <i>Fun</i> — Dinners — Difficulties -- Brilliant Idea -- Interview -- Pro- prietor's Teeth -- Rejection -- A Visitor -- Criticism Invited -- Argument -- Reading-Vow -- Reconsideration -- Odd Coinci- dence First Meeting -- Mark Lemon -- A Ride -- Delight -- Return Home -- <i>Mokeanna</i> -- Unexpected Success -- Mr. Bradbury -- Thackeray -- Artists Collaborating	405

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

SIR F. C. BURNAND	<i>Frontispiece</i>
<i>By Professor H. von Herkomer, R.A.</i>	
FANCY SKETCH	<i>Facing page 40</i>
<i>By Sir Frank Lockwood, Q.C., M.P.</i>	
A LETTER FROM SIR FRANK LOCKWOOD, Q.C., M.P.	" " 70
THE BEST SPORT IN THE WORLD	" " 102
<i>By Sir Frank Lockwood, Q.C., M.P.</i>	
MR. E. LINLEY SAMBOURNE AND DR. BENSON	" " 140
<i>By Sir Frank Lockwood, Q.C., M.P.</i>	
THE COCKEOLLY BIRD DEFIES THE SPORTSMAN	" " 182
A BIRTHDAY CARD	" " 246
<i>By Phil May.</i>	
F. C. B. AS "POPPLE" IN A FARCE OF HIS OWN, WRITTEN FOR THE A.D.C., CAMBRIDGE, IN 1856	" " 275
QUINTIN TWISS AS "BENJAMIN ROBBIN" AND F. C. BURNAND AS "THE CHICKEN" IN THE FARCE OF <i>B.B.</i>	" " 276
F. C. B. AS "MEPHISTOPHOLES" IN HIS BUR- LESQUE OF <i>FAUST</i>	" " 278
THE HON. EVELYN ASHLEY AND F. C. BURNAND AS "LORD LOVEL" AND THE BRIGAND "RUMPTIFOOZLE" AT THE A.D.C., 1856	" " 280

THE HON. "JIMBO" LEIGH AS "SAMMY," 1859	<i>Facing page</i>	282
LORD RICHARD GROSVENOR, NOW LORD STAL- BRIDGE, WHEN UP AT TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE	" "	295
CARDINAL MANNING	" "	320
<i>From a Photograph by Messrs. Elliott & Fry.</i>		
THE "GRAND ALL-ROUNDER"	" "	409
<i>By Sir John Gilbert R.A.</i>		
A SKETCH	" "	416
<i>By Sir John Gilbert, R.A.</i>		

SIR FRANK BURNAND

INTRODUCTION

"Why not begin at the beginning?
That is a way we can all understand."

La Cigale.

"*RESPICE FINEM.*" But as I am a very long way off from "tagging" the last chapter, not having, so far, penned more than three lines of my first, I do not think that, at the present moment, there is any absolutely pressing necessity why I should gravely consider what is the most effective way of crowning an edifice, of which I am at this present moment merely laying the first stone. The materials are at hand, may my selection of them be judicious!

I trust I do not in any way resemble one old friend, "the eminent tragedian," who in the most ancient kind of hackneyed melodrama would scowlingly advance to "the flote," and beckoning to his unwilling victim, would growl in his ear, "I will now tell you the story of my life. Take a chair." And then speaking "through music," and assisted only by a few short exclamations interjected by the patient listener,

he would bore the audience for at least seven minutes, which seemed to his hearers a *très mauvais quart d'heure*. I place this figure before me only as something to be most carefully avoided. If I can succeed in interesting and amusing, the end I have in view will have been attained; and "so, "from start to finish," I hope to keep well in sight of me the motto with which the foregoing "*apologia pro vitâ meâ*" was headed, namely, "*Respice Finem*."

I have been informed, and repeat the information, on the authority of an ancient mariner over eighty years of age, and of his corroborator, an old Deal pilot, that on November 29, 1836, there was experienced on the seacoast the greatest gale of the last century. Its effects were especially felt all along the south-eastern coast, and Ramsgate, which as a rule escapes the full force of the worst weather, was not on this occasion exceptionally favoured. If stars and planets give omens, then may the winds and waves be credited with forecasting events, and that the wind was raised to such an extent on the day of my birth may in some way account for the difficulty I have experienced in "raising the wind" ever since I arrived at such an age as compelled my recognition of necessity as the prolific mother of invention. I think that on November 29, 1836, all the wind that could be raised *was* raised, and, there being no storage of force in my

special behoof, the supply was then and there, as far as concerned my *caisse*, exhausted. It was very flattering, but scarcely considerate, of the winds to honour my birth with a "grand blow-out."

I was born on a Tuesday afternoon, just one quarter of an hour after midday, November 29, 1836, in the reign of King William the Fourth, who died on June 20, 1837, of which historical fact I, being barely eight months old, was not aware. This record may be taken as absolutely correct, since I copy it verbatim from an entry made in the ancient Family Bible by my father in a very clerk-like hand. My father was punctuality itself, and if not a thorough man of business, was professionally, as a stockbroker, "a business man." I should say that his entry, made in the aforesaid Bible, coincided at least within a few minutes with my entry into the world. On the same page it is recorded, in the same, clear and copybook-like hand, how my mother, whose maiden name was Emma Cowley, died on the 7th of December in the same year, and that my sister Emma died April 20, 1840, being then just five years old. Poor little soul! Do I remember her? I fancy I do. I have a vague idea that at that very early age our theatrical instincts were "predominant partners" of other instincts, and that at my little sister's instigation we used to arrange the nursery chairs so as to form a kind of stage on which we gave choreographic performances of a very primitive kind.

By the way, this same old Family Bible (still in my possession) is rather a curiosity in its way; I have seen nothing like it for size, weight, binding, and prodigiously large type, since my very earliest days when my father used to take me to afternoon service in Regent Street at a "chapel-of-ease"; and so it really was, as the seats, all in pews, were very comfortable, and the hassocks of the reddest, highest, and softest. Here one stout clergyman with a reddish face and large whiskers read the prayers and lessons, and when he had quite done, another and rather stouter clergyman was fetched out of what appeared to me to be a sort of side closet, where he had been kept (and really looking all the better for keeping) in reserve till called for by a black-robed clerk who, having conducted him, arrayed in gown and "bands," safely up to the third storey of the three-decked pulpit, shut him in, left him there, and then retired to the ground floor of the same edifice, where, resting calmly in his own private box, he surrendered himself to a quiet half-hour's snooze, in which, by the way, he had already been preceded by the surpliced "cherub" with side-whiskers who "sat up aloft" on the second storey, not by any means "keeping watch o'er" the conduct of the congregation. Probably most of us went to sleep: I suppose I did, because my father never found fault with me for restlessness; or perhaps he himself had followed the excellent example set by the reader and the

clerk, and had closed his eyes to the distractions of this world, while the reverend bluebottle in the upper storey of the three-decker, his head on a level with the gallery,—for there were galleries in those days,—droned on and on, prosing over his written, and perhaps purchased, discourse. Then at the familiar “tag” commencing “And now to, etc. etc.,” we all started up like so many sleeping beauties aroused from slumber, and after the ladies had bent their heads down and the gentlemen standing up had hidden their faces in their hats for a few seconds, just as they always did before the commencement of service, being supposed to indicate a *hat clude* of prayer, but more suggestive of close scrutiny to see that each man had got his own property,¹ we all surged out, the ladies and gentlemen with an air such as betokens those who have made an afternoon “duty-call.” The children, with hope revived, returned to the outside world they had been forced temporarily to quit. They were evidently still oppressed by the consciousness of Sunday clothes, and by the strictness of the day itself, when all their toys were put away, when only goody-goody books were permitted, and when, except for the questionable enjoyment of a compulsory walk in one of the parks, Regent or Hyde, they, deprived of all amuse-

¹ *A propos* of this custom, it used to be said, by somewhat irreverent jesters, that “every one in church studied the interior of his bag in order to remind himself of his Maker.”

ment, were inclined, just for once in the week, to yawn early, and absolutely welcomed the hour when they had to "say good-night to papa and mamma" and nurse fetched them off to bed.

Sweet Sabbatarian days, how tedious, how monotonous, how dull for a child in London! In the country it was better, but even there Sunday was not the day that any child of my own age and acquaintance ever hungered for, whether at school or at home. Perhaps at school it was better, as there was a cessation of lessons; but then, *per contra*, there were lessons of another sort—catechism, for example, and Scripture reading, with explanation of collects and so forth. But taking one day with another in this earliest period of my life—I was sent to school when I was barely six years old—Sunday was more popular with us at school than ever Sunday was at home; that is, at most of the homes of my companions to which I was asked as a very youthful visitor, accompanied by my nurse. I fancy that it was in Mortimer Street that I first "carped the vital airs," but I am quite certain that before I had reached the appreciative age of five my father, a widower, having no wish to be burdened by an establishment, lodged in Brook Street, and thence migrated to Bond Street, where he rented the upper portion, unfurnished, of a house situated between Leader and Cocks' music shop at the corner of Brook Street, with Dolman's, the Catholic book-

seller and publisher, on our left, in Bond Street. That this latter was the then well-known firm of Catholic booksellers and publishers, I was for many years as ignorant as I was of the very existence of Roman Catholicism. There was no display in Dolman's shop of any special articles of piety—there were no missals, rosaries, crucifixes, and so forth, exhibited; indeed, the appearance of the shop was that of an ordinary bookseller's; and here it was that for years I expended the greater part of my pocket-money in purchasing and also in having bound all sorts of novels (the cheapest editions then published), including those by Harrison Ainsworth and G. P. R. James, which, having been neatly half-bound at this same shop, fifty-three years ago, are in my library to this day, and very little the worse for wear.

My father, being a stockbroker, was in the City from after nine o'clock breakfast until his dinner-hour, which was at that time about six or half-past. Sometimes in the summer he would ride into the City, which must have been a dull and dangerous way of taking exercise, send his horse back, and return to ride again in the park. I remember this quite well, as I used to be allowed to stand at the door, in custody of my nurse, to see him start. Before I was taken out for a constitutional. My nurse's walks were generally in the direction of Soho Square, where, in one of the side tributaries, a court with no outlet,

her sister-in-law lived. Into this blind alley ingress was obtained through iron posts looking like cannons stuck on end, muzzles upward, with a tight fit of half a cannon-ball squeezing itself out at the top. Some of these are yet to be occasionally met with in London, but there is a whole regiment of them at Swanage, near Bournemouth, where they were planted by the late Mr. Burt, Sheriff of the City of London, ironmaster, I think, who in fulfilment of a contract with the City had become possessed of this store of queer old London relics, valuable to no one in particular, and here reappearing as curiosities, keeping guard over the great globe, the castle, the mottoes, and the property generally of the eccentric and generous donor, who added all this "show" to the natural attractions of Swanage.

Through these posts from time to time my nurse and little self used to pass in order to make a morning call upon the aforesaid sister-in-law, Mrs. Davis, a hard-working elderly woman, who "went out a-charring," and let lodgings to respectable employés of small tradesmen, whose wants were attended to by an untidy, scraggy-looking girl of about, I suppose, ten years old, very much down at heel, with very red hands, and bare, raw-looking arms that were awfully out at the elbows, and suffering from an absence of pocket-handkerchief. I hated her sniffing, but Mary Anne had to take charge of me, and as after all I was a very lonely little boy she used to be invited to

my nursery to "keep company" and play with me. I remember how at these times she turned up very shiny, very yellow-soapy, with a smell of freshly washed things about her, a pink frock, and, actually, a pocket-handkerchief, in her hand, ready for emergencies. She was very deferential to *me*, very obliging, ate enormously, enjoyed sweets, and breathed heavily. As the lodgers at her aunt's (she was Mrs. Davis's niece) were, every one of them, out at work during the day, her domestic services could be dispensed with, and she generally sniffed herself off before my father came home, which he did as a rule soon after I had finished my tea with a select party downstairs, consisting of the cook, the nurse, the housemaid, Mary Anne, and an eccentric little manservant called Robert Dantzie, the like of whom I have never seen out of a farce.

How I remember him! He was the life and soul of the kitchen, and, I believe, was invaluable to my father as a man of all work, who had been a sort of undersized under-study for the part of a waiter at the London Coffee House (I don't know where this was), and being too small for the place,—he wasn't much over five feet high, if as much,—he had accepted with avidity my father's offer, and had entered his service with an excellent character from the landlord and proprietor of the aforesaid London Coffee House.

He was a shrivelled-up, wizened, frosty-faced,

bright-eyed little man of the kindest disposition, cheerful and as ready as the handiest man in the world could possibly be. If the cook was absent, he could do her work; he was in himself a second housemaid; and as to acting in the capacity of nurse to a solitary boy who was easily amused, why, he was as blithe as a canary at early morn, and as full of stories, all in dialect, Suffolk or Norfolk I think, as might be the best and most fashionable of raconteurs whose dinner depends on his wits and his excellent memory. A good voice too he had, a bit shrill and pipy; and then what strangely worded refrains and songs, which I applauded with all my might and main, not understanding a single word of any one of them. There was an uncouth chorus that even now, after all these years, recurs to me, and vividly too; it was—

“Ríckárř cárř mě,
Mícklě máck máll míngā,”

with the emphasis on the “go.” When, years after, I read the song about “Dick Turpin” in *Pickwick*, wherewith Mr. Sam Weller delighted the assembled coachmen, I was struck I remember by its peculiar refrain and the lengthened-out drawl of the last syllables, and I felt sure that its *tune* must have been uncommonly like, if not the very one, that little old Robert Dantzic used to sing on festive occasions when, my father being at the opera or dining out, Sarah, the cook, entertained her cousin, Corporal

Waters, the Lifeguardsman, and one or two other guests invited by my nurse and the housemaid. Had I not been present as a guest, I suppose, there would have been a difficulty, as otherwise I should have had to be put to bed early and to be attended to and looked after from time to time, thereby taking somebody away from the festive board in the midst of their enjoyment. Thus it chanced that I used to be, invariably, invited as a guest, placed near to cook who sat at the head of the table, and opposite the corporal on her left, whom, at first, I regarded with awe on account of his uniform and commanding stature, but came at last to learn to love (as the cook had done), and to appreciate his powers of conversation, which were only excelled by his capacity for good feeding and drinking. Those parties were "small and (fairly) early." There was singing (of the song aforesaid) by Mr. Dantzie and the dark-eyed housemaid Anne, but before the turn came round to Corporal Waters, and before we had arrived at the sentimental toasts and sentiments, I had clambered on to my nurse's knee and had soon become insensible to all music, vocal or instrumental, until the early morning, when I woke up with a confused recollection of the happy past, but with one injunction firmly imprinted on my memory, namely, that I was "not to say anything about it."

I never *did* say anything about anyone or about anything that happened. I knew a lot, but, as a

popular modern song has it, "I ain't a-going to tell"; no, not after all these years, though "I could a tale unfold" of the "high life" they led "below stairs," which perhaps may better serve my purpose as material for a "farcical comedy" with music, for our domestics were nothing if not harmonious. So let us keep on the drawing-room floor, if you please, and when the domestics are wanted we can ring for them; visiting occasionally the nursery, which, in this very nearly prehistoric time, represented no inconsiderable portion of the habitable globe where I lived, moved, and had my breakfast; while for my dinner at midday and "five o'clock" tea I had to descend into the lower regions, where I was always a welcome and rather spoiled guest.

One thing of importance occurs to me as worth mentioning before dismissing the whole household, nurse excepted, at one minute's notice.

"The child is father to the man," and at the age of five this child was passionately devoted to small theatres, with Skelt's scenes and characters, and boxes of paints. This, with spelling out easy fairy stories, kept me amused and interested by the hour—much, as I now in later life perceive, to my nurse's great contentment. Most children delight in toy-theatres, and not only was I no exception to the rule, but I was able to show to what perfection the Early Nursery Drama could be brought.

I got on with my spelling and reading at a

prodigious rate under the guidance of a Miss Nicholls, a day governess of the Cornelia Blimber type in appearance, provided at the instance of my aunt, my father's youngest sister, Miss Burnand, known in the family as "Toney," and of my maternal grandmother, Mrs. Cowley (the kindest, handsomest, and sweetest woman in the world, who preserved her almost unimpaired sight, her regular teeth, and good looks until well past eighty), who thought that I was not making the most of my early days by passing so much of my time within what I may term "the kitchen range." So I was provided with a governess, and soon got *Blue Beard* by heart, and could give a splendid performance of this immortal drama on the stage of the Theatre Royal Downstairs, in presence of cook, housemaid, the two or three visitors already named, and Robert Dantzie. The finish was magnificent; a perfect blaze of triumph, brought about by the ignition of some sulphurous powder (in a penny pan which became so hot that no one could touch it), that caused my audience to open the kitchen windows, the scullery door, and as quickly as possible to bundle me with my show out of the place, upstairs, and to bed; while thorough ventilation, wherever possible, cleared away the stifling smell and smoke caused by the burning of Blue Beard's castle and by the simultaneous illumination of a wonderfully effective scene, vividly painted by that great artist Skelt, showing how all the wives in the

Blue Chamber had become vindictive skeletons ; while one of them, the tallest and probably the most ill-used of the harem, was savagely pinning the wicked Blue Beard himself with a dart, at which moment he ought to have descended through a trap-door and to have been let down to the depths below (represented by the kitchen table), on which my little show was erected, with no curtains or any scenery whatever to conceal the mechanism, that is myself, from the interested and uncommonly friendly audience, only that of course the trap-door couldn't be opened without my getting my hand in underneath and pulling Mr. Blue Beard through ; and in attempting this grand effect, I upset the entire stage ! over went the oil lamps (three small wicks in a tin case), all alight ; over went characters, scenes, and three or four tins of red, blue, and green fire, which, if providentially they did not cause a grand conflagration, at least, as I have said before, scattered the audience right and left, and blew the manager, scene-painter, actors, actresses, prompter (with Skelt's book of the words), all together being "rolled into one" little boy of between five and six years old, upstairs and into bed as quickly as possible.

But, oh, that Blue Beard's blue chamber ! It was horrible, and got upon my nerves, so that often and often, when my nurse had gone down to supper and left me alone in bed, in company only with a rushlight, which illuminated the nursery through a

lot of little holes perforated in its japanned tin stand, I saw in the shadows created by the rushlight, dreadful, flickering, moving, black shapes on the walls and furniture, and countless eyes, as it were, peering at me out of the walls. Then, in a corner where no light penetrated, there appeared the horrid skeleton with the cruel dart that pierced Skelt's Blue Beard, and gradually "she," "she who was to be obeyed" (it was intended for the ossified representative of one of Blue Beard's wives), was joined by all the other skeletons, and the little boy in bed screamed his heart out, and cried and yelled so loudly, that the piercing sounds actually "raised Cain," or rather brought up my nurse from the depths below. She had hoped I was fast asleep by this time, and so, after soothing me—she never scolded, bless her—she determined to finish her meal up in the nursery, having prudently brought "the materials" with her. Then I slept; but never, never, never in all these years shall I forget that one night; and never, were I to live in history as a second Methuselah, could I forget it. "'Tis of such stuff as dreams are made of," but sometimes 'tis lasting stuff that won't wear out, and is ever as fresh in my memory as is my first night at my first school, whither I was sent, a little chap still in frock and pinafore, for there were for small boys, at that period, no picturesquely Vandyke-cut jackets, shirts to match, knickerbockers, and shoes or brilliantly buttoned boots. In those

very matter-of-fact days tailoring and haberdashery combined to make grown-up men look ridiculously stiff; the "dandy" was gradually dying out with the "Count D'Orsay" period of fashion; the ladies were all curls and flounces, and the costumes of children, from babies in feathered hats to boys' wide collars and peaked caps, were absurdly pretentious. What an ugly time that was for dress! Look at the soldier of the period with his stiff stock, and the unhappy "new" policeman with his top hat, his military stock, his belt, blue tail-coat, white trousers, and cumbersome boots. John Leech has them all in his early *Punch* volumes. As I am digressing, I may mention how well I remember the voice of the watchman in Bond Street calling, "past ten," and, if I happened to be kept awake by a skeleton, not "in the cupboard" but on the nursery wall, "past twelve."

Clearly can I recall the "galanty show" that used to be set up just close to our house every evening in winter nights about eight o'clock, where there was a drama acted by black profile figures on a brilliantly illuminated canvas curtain, the plot of which was as sensational as mysterious. I remember well "May day" as celebrated by the small remnant of melancholy mummers going about the London streets; one was attired as a bedraggled clown, another as a "dandy," with whom came a fascinating columbine in dirty book-muslin skirts and soiled

"fleshings," "a thing of beauty" to me as a boy, but by no means "a joy for ever"; and the mysterious Jack in the Green himself, who danced about within a bower of green leaves which he supported on his shoulders, with only his legs from below the knee visible, while his face could just be seen through a small hole, peering out like an owl in an ivy bush. There were sweeps, too, accompanying it, with shovel and broom, and a muffled man with pandean pipes and a big drum was the peripatetic orchestra. It was poor columbine's business to "smile and smile" as she presented a large silver ladle to such spectators as appeared at all likely to be generous towards art, whatever grotesque form it might take. The mummers are seen no more, "lost to sight, to mummerly dear!"

The school selected for my first appearance in the character of "The New Boy" was recommended by Aunt "Toney" and my Uncle Arthur, the latter of whom was at "Lloyds" with his father, and was acquainted with Mr. Dodgson, senior, and his son, Mr. William Dodgson, both "something in the City," whose sisters kept a preparatory school at Stamford Hill, within an easy drive for my aunt in her open trap from Stoke Newington, where she lived at home with her two brothers, Arthur Charles and Frederick, and my grandfather and grandmother.

But I will defer this part of my reminiscences till a little later, and give "La Famille Burnand" at

Stoke Newington a chapter to itself. Its characters belong to such comedy as delighted Charles Lamb, and would have served as excellent material for that other Charles, namely, Dickens the Incomparable.

I was taken to school by my nurse Mrs. Davis, who was in her way quite another Peggotty, and to whom I was as deeply attached as was little David to that excellent type of motherly woman.

Of course I was accompanied by a small hamper, the possession of which, however, could not console me in the agony of a first separation from the representative of all that was dear to a little boy in his little world. She bore up bravely, but we wept together until I was left to gulp down my sobs, standing on the doorstep in charge of the eldest Miss Dodgson, who held my hand lest I should suddenly take it into my head to follow Mrs. Davis as she waved her last adieu to me from one of the large gates that led out into the lane (I rather think it was called Springfield Lane), and then disappeared. I remember, clearly, being allowed, as a favour granted to a new and very small boy, to take tea with the schoolmistresses at their end of the long table where the boys, seated on long forms on either side of the tea-and-bread-and-butter board, regarded me furtively with no little curiosity, and, as I thought, with some dislike, owing to my superior position "for that occasion only," slightly suggestive of future favouritism.

After this I was introduced to a few choice companions, whose parents knew my father or some of my relatives "at home"—that is as a matter of fact in business, as the entire supply of boys at this establishment came from Stamford Hill, Stoke Newington, Upper Clapton, and the parts about where City men belonging to Lloyds, to banks, and the Stock Exchange, had, at that simple time less pretentious than nowadays, their "local habitation," quite in keeping with their "name."

Whether a Miss Sharp had had the school previous to the Dodgson (or Dodson) family, or whether she sold herself as one of the fixtures to be taken over and further utilised by the purchasers, I am not certain, but of one thing I am very nearly sure, and that is, that a "Miss Sharp" (a lovely name for a tall, thin schoolmistress regarding us through spectacles astride a long and pointed nose) was, so to speak, "the superior" of the others, and at the head of affairs generally; and that this lady, as above described, was the eldest of four or five sisters, and was not Miss Sharp at all, but the eldest Miss Dodgson. Miss Sharp had something to do with it; perhaps had been equal to her name and had been sharp enough to part with the "flourishing concern" to the Dodgsons. On consideration I concluded that this was the case. Old Mr. Dodgson, although a "City man," was attired much as a clergyman used to be in those days

(1843) when clerical costume was undistinguishable from that of a country farming gentleman or a partner in a bank. Of him and of his son William, who bore a strong resemblance to his sister, the eldest Miss Dodgson, only with neatly trimmed side-whiskers and a generally smarter air of dressiness, we saw hardly anything at all, except that we had an occasional glimpse of them in the early morning when they were brushing their hats in the hall previous to departing for their daily "work and labour, until the evening."

The sisters who managed and taught were the one just mentioned, who paraded the house in gloves, with a bunch of keys and a business-like basket, quite a "Betsy Trotwood"; the second, whose name I have utterly forgotten, and whose appearance I can recall only indistinctly, who devoted herself entirely to teaching, having nothing whatever to do with the household arrangements; the third, Miss Bessie, a very dry person, with sharp-pointed fingers and mittens, and always extremely neat and a perfect pattern of tidiness; and the fourth was Miss Decima (why "Decima" unless there were or had been six others?)—it sounded well "Miss Decima Dodgson"—totally different from all her sisters, except in her kindness; for they were all kind and gentle, even when they had to rap the knuckles of obstinately, lazy or otherwise naughty boys with a ruler in order to "call them to attention."

We were all in love with Miss Decima, especially myself, and it was she who appeared before me as a bright, buxom, good fairy, with "comfortable words" (she did look comfortable!) after my wretched first night in the dormitory, where my torrent of tears and gulping broken-hearted sobs must have disturbed the placid slumbers of the other seven boys, all tucked up snugly in their little cots. I remember the maid letting down the old-fashioned shutters and admitting the light. Where was I? How was I? Miserable enough, and after a sad and sleepy toilet, in which we were assisted by a handmaiden who attacked our hair with vigorous brush and comb, we went down to prayers in the dining-room, a function whereat I had never previously assisted, having never seen or heard of the existence of such a devotional exercise as "family prayers," as of course my private worship had up to now been to say the Lord's Prayer and "God bless dear papa," with my knees on the carpet and my head in my nurse's lap, just at the last minute before being bundled into bed, and again in the morning immediately I was dressed and ready to descend for breakfast. These prayers quite astonished me: the eldest Miss Dodgson acted as chaplain, and her sisters as lay-clerks, while the boys were the congregation, coming in well and punctually with the "Amen." But "Amen" stuck in my throat as it did in Macbeth's, though for a very different reason. The prayers

recalled my own private devotions in my nursery, my nurse, and my home ; nor could I be comforted until Miss Decima had taken me in hand and consoled me with her kind manner, her cheery words, her bright smile, and the shaking of her beautiful light coloured ringlets. (You will find her type in one of John Leech's early pictures, where a little boy wants to kiss a big young lady under the mistletoe.) I was only six and she was probably twenty-five, but if I could have carried her off there and then I would have done so, defended her against all comers, and had become her devoted knight, slave, champion for ever ! To be her husband, bah !—such a thing never entered into my head. However, I was only "rising seven," and from that day to this my passion has never been declared, and, though kept secret, it has done no such harm as that with which the "canker-worm" is credited. Oddly enough her Latin Christian name served me within the last few years for the name of the heroine who played the *title-rôle* in a comic opera adapted from a French one, *Miss Helyett*, and played at the Criterion Theatre. But, heavens ! what a leap from "rising seven" to forty-eight ("Who fears to speak of forty-eight?" to adapt the Irish song ; and I willingly reply, "Not I !"), from a little boy just out of the nursery and at his first school, to myself as a comic opera librettist with all my experiences and "reminiscences."

So I was comforted, and thenceforth my earliest

schooldays passed very happily ; I always delighted to get away for the holidays, always in tears on returning, overjoyed at the occasional visits of my Aunt Toney (with tips), and of my nurse (with hamper) ; until I had done enough in the preparatory way to prove myself ready for a higher grade in the educational system.

I remember we had a large playground at the back, where there went on a considerable amount of fighting. We small and very small boys never gave practical effect to the early lessons contained in the once widely known moral poems by Dr. Watts—

“ Let dogs delight
To bark and bite,
For 'tis their nature to ;
Let bears and lions
Growl and fight ”—

But I have forgotten the last line, for a reason which will appear later in these reminiscences, and must not be obtruded here. Then it went on—

“ But children you
Should never let
Your angry passions rise,
Your little hands
Were never made ”—

And again, for the same reason, I must break off abruptly. We did fight over our games of ball and marbles (what boys play marbles nowadays?), and were summarily fetched in, generally by Miss Fanny or Miss Bessie, the two policemen of the teaching

family, and chastised. How chastised? There was no birching; but there was a ruler diverted from its original use for the purpose of rapping us over the knuckles and slapping our open palms. Of course we howled: this we did before we were touched, in order to soften the heart of the chastiser, and thereby induce her to temper justice with mercy. There were other punishments, due to the inventive genius of the more severe of the Dodgson sisters, one of which was a patent leather stock made after the pattern of the kind that the early Victorian constables used to wear (*vide* John Leech's pictures), which being strapped tightly round the neck, kept the sufferer's chin up in the air, while a stick, like the handle of the sort of broom on which witches were from time immemorial supposed to ride to the moon "and sweep the cobwebs off the sky," was placed under our armpits so as to expand the chest, and then the culprit's wrists were so firmly bound together that fidgeting, except with the legs, was impossible; and in this attitude the culprit had to remain in a corner with his face to the wall during tea-time, when he could only hear the munching and the drinking and the scraps of the mistresses' conversation; while being for the nonce deprived of his usual buttered slices of bread, or bread sparsely treacled, and as the tears slowly trickled down his cheeks, his feelings being with difficulty suppressed, he had the opportunity afforded him of solemnly but silently vowing and protesting to

himself that never, never, never would he do anything again that could possibly deserve so condign a punishment. When relieved, but not pardoned, the prisoner was regaled with a slice of dry bread and a mug of lukewarm milk and water. Another punishment was the back-board, which combines moral and physical improvement. •

I remember I began learning music here. I think it was my dear Miss Decima who, with her own plump and well-shaped hands, started me in my scales. I was never afraid of *her*, and under her guidance made a fair commencement in music. Afterwards in the holidays, at my grandmother's house, I had to continue music lessons under one Mr. Longhurst, whose special patron was my Uncle Theophilus, at whose house in London, later on, I remember him as being, on Fridays, the invariable accompanist of the quartette party that regularly met for music first and dinner afterwards, especially dinner. One Mr. Frost was our writing master: I rather think he wrote books on the subject of caligraphy. And what I do above all things recall is that all the boys learnt dancing, our teacher being a Mr. Noble, who, however mysteriously wrapped up on entering the house (but this, his arrival, as a sort of behind-the-scenes performance, I as a diminutive boy pupil was only once privileged to witness, and that was quite by accident), appeared in the play-room in a white doubly-tied cravat (like Mr. Dombey's

white "choker" in the illustrations by "Phiz"), a very elaborate shirt frill, a blue tail-coat, with shining brass buttons, fastened in front, and showing only an inch of white waistcoat (double-breasted, I should say), and he was "continued in our next" with tight-fitting black pantaloons, terminating in silk stockings of a black stripe pattern, the entire costume being finished off with patent leather "pumps," very thin, very shiny, tied with large black bows. His hair was as brilliant as were his patent leathers, and tightly curled. "There's a picture for you!" You will see his counterpart in sketches by George Cruikshank. In his tail pocket he carried a "kit," i.e. a very small kind of toy violin, and this he would play all the time he was performing steps for our imitation, while "speaking through music," as the stage-directions have it, and directing our movements. He was a wonderful person, of very great importance. The Misses Dodgson would come in and watch, perhaps they also in private took lessons of him; probably Miss Decima did. We began with the "first position," and so mounted up the dancing scale by the aid of time and tune to quadrille, and thence . . . to polka! The polka, I suppose, had been then quite recently introduced. At all events we learnt it. I believe Mr. Noble had considerable experience, and I fancy that he was a *maître de danse* at the Opera. But if ever there was a Professor of Turveydropian Deportment, assuredly Mr.

Noble was that man. And what an appropriate name! The one Noble at our rather bourgeois-class school! How admirably might he have sung the verse in the *Bohemian Girl*, "My birth is noble," only he could not have continued "and unstained my crest," as if ever hair-dye was evident on any man it was on his Jove-like locks.

To our other accomplishments was added military drill by a sergeant in full uniform, of whom all that I can recollect is, that we regarded him with great awe, were very obedient to his word of command, that he spoke with some sort of a brogue, whether Scotch, Irish, or English north country, I don't know, and that he pronounced "one" as "wan." "Now when I say 'wan'" — he used to commence, and then followed the instruction. Before I retired from active service at the preparatory school I was using a dummy musket, could go through the drill—present, fire, come to attention—with all the alacrity of a modern volunteer, or the little performer in "Arthur's Show," as remembered by Justice Shallow. After the age of eight, I was superannuated, and was never drilled again, nor wielded musket more.

But before I entirely leave Springfield and the Dodgson sisters (ah, sweet Decima! so "*burom, blithe, and débonnaire*," "O sweet Anne Pagé!") I will, being in the neighbourhood, which we shall never again revisit, give a brief account of "La famille Burnand" in the Albion Road, Stoke Newington.

CHAPTER

ABOUT STOKE NEWINGTON, ETC., ALBION ROAD, CHURCH STREET—OUR FAMILY THERE

MY grandfather was stone blind, and yet every day he went by omnibus all alone into the City to his office at Lloyds, and returned as he came, assisted by my Uncle Arthur, or, in his absence, carefully guided by the conductor at starting from the house, and on descending from the omnibus, and led into Lloyds by the beadle in attendance. He was so well known there, that, in the absence of either of his usual guides, he had no difficulty in arriving at his usual seat of business. Nothing irritated him when at home so much as his anxious wife telling him where to place his hand as he felt his way along the drawing-room wall to his favourite corner by the side of the fireplace.

"Damn it, ma'am," he used to say in a petulant, old-fashioned way that I have since learnt to associate with the manners of Sir Anthony Absolute and the irascible elderly gentlemen of eighteenth century comedies—"Damn it, ma'am, I know the way!" These outbreaks used to frighten me at first, but

as I noticed that my grandmother only took an extra pinch of snuff, while my uncles and "Aunt Toney" merely smiled, my nervousness was soon allayed, for I perceived that these fitful outbreaks were as "sound and fury, signifying nothing." After I was six years old I frequently passed a portion of my holiday time at my grandfather's in Albion Road, Stoke Newington, and I remember being always rather afraid of him, so that until I was addressed by my grandmother or aunt I would keep myself so quietly employed with an illustrated story book that my blind grandfather was quite unaware of my presence. He could be very merry at Christmas time, when he treated his grandchildren and their parents to a quaint old ditty about "The little farthing rushlight," which, as I suppose, had in his day been a popular comic song, neither worse nor better than any other popular song, modern or ancient.

The household consisted of my grandfather—I think his Christian name was Louis—my grandmother, Frederick the youngest but one of my uncles, Arthur the youngest, and Antoinette, known to every one in the least acquainted with the family as "Aunt Toney." Then there was a portly butler called "Sam," who, having been in the family for some twenty or thirty years, placed himself on the most familiar and confidential footing with his master and mistress—especially with the latter—and on an

affable equality with all the sons and daughters, my uncles and aunts, married or unmarried, whom he had seen grow up under his care, since at various times he had been their nurse, guardian, tutor, play-fellow, and general instructor as occasion might require. As I now see, this state of things arose from my grandmother's ignorance of English, and from her willingness to take life very easily as long as she was left with her cards, her snuff, and her Voltairian books. Although our family was originally Savoyard and Catholic, yet a branch of it in the Pays de Vaud belonged to the "Grey League" of the Protestant Swiss at the time of the quarrels between Austria, France, Savoy, and Spain. Whatever they had nominally become, the cast of countenance was most decidedly Jewish. As far as I can remember, my grandfather was rather Jewish, while my grandmother (a Sapte) was undeniably so. Looking at their portraits, and remembering them distinctly later in life, I have no hesitation in saying that the Hebrew type is certainly prominent. Lewis (or Louis) Burnand, standing about five feet four, was an unmistakable Mosaic, as was also George, the eldest son, who on the Stock Exchange as a young man was nicknamed "the handsome Jew," and Arthur, the youngest, whom I have already mentioned as the bachelor of the family, living at home with his sister, was certainly of the same type.

Hebraic or not, originally the name is French-

Swiss, and the family can be traced to Savoy. As to this Savoyard origin, all I have ever been able to ascertain was given me in a letter (dated December 30, 1878, *Tewin Water, Welwyn*) from my uncle George Burnand. He wrote: "I fear it will not be in my power to give you much information on the subject. A Duke of Savoy used to go to Meudon in the hunting season, and took with him his suite, a member of which was one named *Bournand*, as the name was originally spelt: he was a knight and a favourite with the Duke. He had the misfortune to fall in love, and married the girl, who may have been a milkmaid or a duchess—*Je n'en sais rien*—but his children were lawfully begotten, and from this union came the present generation of the Burnands. These Burnands were a fighting set, and were in the service of France, hence the *fleur de lys* and the bloody hand in the crest." My uncle then goes on to inform me that Colonel Burnand, "the present proprietor of the Château Burnand," would furnish me with details extending back three hundred and fifty years. It appears that my Uncle George paid this colonel a visit in 1851, "when he showed us his crest, which is the same as ours." Then he adds, "My grandfather, Paul Burnand, was the original importation from the Savoy. He was an insurance and bill-broker." "There was," my uncle informed me, "a coachbuilder, in Bond Street, named Burnand, with whom I dealt when I was first married. He

was of a Yorkshire family, but I could make out no more common ancestry for our families than Adam and Eve. I paid his bill, which was exorbitant, I suppose on the strength of his being a namesake, and he disappeared from Bond Street soon afterwards." There was a solicitor of the name whom I saw once. He was no sort of connection or relation, and I had no great desire ever to renew his acquaintance. And that is about as much as any one of the present generation of Burnands knows of a matter which is simply *une affaire de famille*, accidentally interesting to some few others besides the present bearers of the name.

Frederick was in no business: he had travelled a great deal, read a great deal, was a careless, rakish kind of person, dreadfully irritable and at perpetual feud with my aunt's favourite Spitz dog that she had brought from Switzerland. The barking and snarling of this dog drove my Uncle Frederick wild; he would start up from his easy-chair, where after breakfast he was always reading some French or Italian book, and pursue the unfortunate Spitz into corner after corner, whacking at him with his napkin, he swearing, the dog snarling, and I on a chair with my legs tucked up underneath, frightened to death lest one or the other or both should go mad and wreak their rage upon me. How I trembled! And how glad I was when Sam the butler entered on the scene to clear away, and when later on I was summoned to take

a hand at some lessons with which it was considered advisable I should be employed during my holidays.

The governess who had brought up all the family from earliest childhood was a real character: she might, with black ringlet wig, lace ruffles, and queer shapeless gown, have walked out of an old-fashioned farce, or walked into one, and have immediately taken her place by right of appearance and manner as one of the eccentric *dramatis personæ*. Never before or since have I ever seen anything like her off the stage, and very rarely on it. She must have been a clever woman, as she had educated the entire family from the commencement, had grounded them in all the elementary work, could speak fluently Italian and French, and was even in her old age (what age she was when I was between six and nine I haven't an idea, but she might have been over seventy, and looked twice as old as my grandmother) able to read without glasses and to act as companion to my grandmother, with whom she was on the most friendly terms, conversing with her in French and Italian. She was the butt of the entire family, who were, however, very fond of her, and wouldn't have parted with her on any consideration whatever, regarding her as a unique curio, which indeed she was. Her name was Tackle.

Arthur Burnand and Toney were devoted to music, opera, and theatricals. They always had

one or two young ladies staying in the house, to one of whom my uncle was invariably supposed to be attached; but the ladies were changed from time to time, and my uncle remained a bachelor, as my aunt remained a spinster, until first one, then the other died, at about seventy years of age. They were devoted to children, and their married brothers and sisters had been thoughtful enough to provide a considerable number of additions to the Burnand family, on whom the bachelor uncle and maiden aunt could expend as much time and money, especially at Christmas time, as might seem good to them.

What Christmases these were! At first, of course, my recollection of them is now somewhat dim, but gradually as I arrived at the mature years of seven, eight, and upwards, I can look back on these Christmas festivals as occasions ever memorable, serving me, many, many years afterwards, when my wife and I being the entertainers, our children were as I was when I used to be taken to my grandfather's house, as models, so to speak, for our home festivals and family gatherings, revived and renewed, after an interval of "many changing years." Such festivals have been among the happiest times of our lives, even though our happiness has gradually come to be tempered by some sadness. "How many old recollections, and how many dormant sympathies does Christmas time awaken!" exclaims Charles Dickens

in his delightful and ever-fresh chapter concerning the seasonable festivities at Dingley Dell. And he continues: "We write these words now, many miles distant from the spot at which, year after year, we met on that day, a merry and joyous circle. Many of the hearts that throbbed so gaily then have ceased to beat; many of the looks that shone so brightly then have ceased to glow; the hands we grasped have grown cold; the eyes we sought have hid their lustre in the grave; and yet the old house, the room, the merry voices and smiling faces, the jest, the laugh, the most minute and trivial circumstances connected with those happy meetings, crowd on our mind at each recurrence of the season, as if the last assemblage had been but yesterday! Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childish days; that can recall to the old man the pleasure of his youth, that can transport the sailor and the traveller thousands of miles away, back to his own fireside and his quiet home!"

The modern school of writers shrug their shoulders over this, and pronounce it "bathos or clap-trap." Personally I believe Dickens *felt* intensely every word of it; and, personally, I can read this passage over and over again, Christmas after Christmas, and exclaim, with the orator who couldn't make a speech, without descending into bathos or becoming sentimental, "My own sentiments, sir, only infinitely better expressed."

However, this is not a disquisition on Christmas, nor an excursion into the small state of which Charles Lamb was "every inch a king"; so being only "reminiscences," as Mr. Sam Weller might have explained, "my wisdom and remarks are limited."

Whatever may have been our foreign origin, our keeping of Christmas was decidedly English. Perhaps it may be thus "kept" in the Pays de Vaud whence we came. From Switzerland also came the Sapte family, to which my grandmother belonged. She had foreign relations or connections by marriage. The Baron de Lom, or some such name, who, with the Baroness, paid a visit to Albion Road while I was there, when not a word of English was spoken by any one of the party, was her brother or brother-in-law. This made a great impression on me at the time, an impression deepened and made permanent by their present to me of some foreign sugary cakes like Bath buns, "only more so." They laughed very much at my attempts, under prompting, to thank them in French, and then they left. It was for me their first and only appearance, and I have not taken much trouble to trace them to their Swiss château, wherever it may have been.

Another couple of foreigners, an uncle of my father's, Count Louisy, accompanied by his son, once visited us. They were both handsome men, the latter, as I well remember, in uniform, but why in uniform when calling on my father in Bond Street

I have not the slightest idea. I remember their manners and their moustachios, which frightened me. They dined with my father; they smoked during the meal, a proceeding that astonished me so considerably that for some length of time I was under the impression that all foreigners smoked during meal-times, and, as I could not dissociate the youthful Count from his uniform, I concluded that most of them were soldiers. There was also a Madame Christine, very old and witch-like, who snuffed and played cards with my grandmother.

Since those very early years I have occasionally met with the names of Baron de Lom and Count Louisy in foreign journals, but never to my knowledge have I ever met with any descendants of these passing acquaintances of my earliest youth. They walked on, had their scene, which had nothing whatever to do with the plot of the piece, as far as I can make out, and then walked off again. *Sic transiunt* Baron and Count, and with them passed away long ago all chance of my coming into a foreign title, with lands in Savoy, and a castle picturesquely situated, overlooking a lake in a canton of the Pays de Vaud. Some thirty years ago, visiting, for the second time, Neuchâtel and the regions thereabout, while aboard a lake steamer, I fell into conversation with a parish priest, who, on learning my name, exclaimed, "Mais, Monsieur Burnand!" (he pronounced it "Bournong"), "C'est que vous êtes de notre pays,"

and forthwith proceeded to inform me how, in his parish, our name was so far from being uncommon, that he himself could point out to me "un boucher, deux ou trois boulangers, et, en effet, beaucoup, beaucoup, de gens ; et," he added politely and emphatically, noticing perhaps a slight shade of disappointment on my countenance, "*et de très-bonnes gens.*" Then, on my expressing satisfaction with this testimony to the "niceness" of persons who might be distant relations (meaning, that is, their remoteness by the amount of mileage between London and the Pays de Vaud), he proceeded, as if recalling to his mind some facts which would give me even still greater pleasure, "Il y a un magistrat, un de mes bons amis, qui porte le nom de Burnand, et"—here he turned and directed my attention to a castle in the dim distance—"voilà le Château Burnand appartenant à Monsieur le Baron qui porte le même nom. Oh, Monsieur," he finished, pleasantly smiling, as he helped himself to an enormous pinch of snuff, reminding me of my childhood's days and my grandmother's gold box of *tabac à priser*, always at hand, "Je vous assure que si vous voudrez me donner l'honneur de passer chez moi, je vais vous introduire à tous vos chers parents si longtemps perdus à vue, n'est ce pas ? et, à propos, notre canton est presque entièrement Catholique." This he added as being of special interest to me, in consequence of my having previously informed him "que tous mes aïeux avaient

été Protestants, et, probablement, Lutherans ou Calvinistes."

There is a Swiss artist now exhibiting in the Paris Salon, M. Victor Burnand—I think it is "Victor"—who comes from the Pays de Vaud. He is a Protestant, so he informs me by letter. As by some *contretemps* I have invariably been in Paris when he has been in London, or *vice versa*, like the immortal and ever-recurring "strange case of Cox and Box," we have, as yet, never met.

At Albion Road, Stoke Newington, on most Sundays when my father used to take me down to see my grandparents, we used to meet representatives of French Swiss families, all hailing, I expect, originally, like ourselves, from the Pays de Vaud.

There was a dry, snuffy old man, a Mister Schatzeler, there were some Miévilles (with whom my father and uncles had been at school abroad), Louis Miéville, Amédée Miéville, a Chastelan, a Rougemont or two, a few Toulmins, the Rivazes (one of my aunts was a Mrs. Henry Rivaz), all of them with un-English names, and with decidedly foreign characteristics, specially in snuff-taking. All of them loved music more or less, except my Uncle Rivaz, who used to annoy me very much when I was quite a small boy by jocularly saluting me as "Count."¹ I never could understand why. It

¹ As far as the Herald's Office was concerned, I have no doubt that for fees up to a considerable amount they would establish my claim to

amused *him*, but I never heard of its causing the slightest gratification to any one else, least of all to myself. I think I could have put up with his calling me "Count" had he made it worth my while, but while every one of my uncles, my aunts, as well as my grandmother and grandfather, invariably gave me handsome Christmas boxes (all in new silver, too!), my uncle Henry Rivaz never gave me a single sixpence, but would only laugh, pinch my ear (I resented this; why didn't he shake hands properly?), and say, "Hallo, Count!" Only this, and nothing more. Some affections may be priceless; I could name the value of mine from half a crown upwards. Thackeray was right when he rejoiced in giving a tip to a schoolboy. "It blesses him that gives and him that takes."

They were all fond of the theatre, and on more than one occasion had given (it was before I was old enough to be invited) representations which, as I was afterwards informed, were far in advance of the usual "amateur theatricals." They were fortunate enough to secure the services of Stanfield and Roberts, then not Academicians, to paint the scenes of *Who's your Friend*, or *The Queensberry Fête*, a piece written by J. R. Planché for Madame Vestris and Charles Mathews, which had been performed for the first time at the "Theatre Royal, Haymarket, on Tuesday,

the rank of a chevalier in Switzerland. But the luxury was too expensive; so the Herald's College may say to me, "*Point d'argent, point de Suisse*"

News from Peckham



Aunt F. Maria
goes to the Fancy Dress Ball
as Tilly. N.B. Of course she wears
her boots etc.

August 22, 1843," when Charles Mathews played the countryman, *Giles Fairland*. The *Countess of Rosedale* was impersonated by Madame Vestris (I think Mrs. Augustus Toulmin played it on the occasion above mentioned), and Mrs. Glover was *Lady Bab Blazon*.¹

¹ *A propos of The Queensberry File*, I find that at the Haymarket, under the management of Mr. Benjamin Webster, this piece, having proved a "triumphant success," was announced for every night, with *The Wedding Breakfast*, "until further notice," in which pieces there appeared Mr. Charles Mathews, Madame Vestris, Mrs. Glover, Mr. Buckstone, Miss Julia Bennett ("pretty Miss Julia Bennett," whom I remember as still "pretty" and bright many years after, Mr. W. Farren, son of "Old Farren," actor and stage manager, Mr. Strickland, Mr. Tibbety, and Mrs. Namby "her first appearance since her severe indisposition," all names of favourites with the theatre-going public at that time, and some of them not likely to be forgotten, for the great actor's fame lives as long as a great statesman's. At the end of this programme (from which I copy by the kindness of Mr. Dillon Croker, who is a collector of these dainties), Mr. Ben Webster offers "a prize of £500, with contingent advantages, for a prose comedy in five acts, illustrative in plot and character of modern British manners and customs." In these days there were very few long runs, the work of the actor was considerable, the changes of bill frequent, and the prices "in front" were "orchestra stalls" 5s each, which could be "retained the whole evening", so it is evident that the pit did not then reach right away down to the orchestra, as it most certainly did later on, when the stalls had been removed, and when until the Bancrofts reconstructed the theatre, it was all pit from the back right up to the orchestra, as it was also at the Lyceum. "first price boxes 5s., pit 3s., gallery 2s., upper gallery 1s.", and "second price at nine o'clock boxes 3s., pit 2s., gallery 1s., upper gallery 6d., private boxes two guineas and one guinea and a half each." Rather a difference from the modern prices, and the Haymarket was a representative of quite

These "real theatricals" I never saw. What we, the little grandchildren and nephews and nieces, were treated to was a performance on a toy stage. Arthur Burnand, with his sister Toney, had made a perfect model of a stage, with wings, flies, traps, lights above and below, about five feet in height, and, I should say, about four feet in width. It was worked by my uncle, aunt, and some young lady friends. They painted the scenery, dressed the dolls, contrived the machinery, I remember some witches going up in a balloon, to enthusiastic applause from a crowded juvenile audience in the front drawing room, — designed wonderful processions, making some of the figures likenesses easily recognisable by their young "friends in front," who would cheer, shout, and laugh at the appearance, for example, of the old governess, Miss Tackle, already mentioned in this veracious history. The play was a collaboration of all the talents, and all the talents learnt it by heart, each person taking two or three characters, and invisibly acting up to the part in differentiating peculiarities of voice and intonation.

At this distance of time, I am sure it was very clever. Years after, I saw that old stage laid aside up in a lumber room. Since then I have seen not a few stages in theatres that have been "to let," and frequently have I recalled to mind the appearance of this toy stage *en décadence*, put aside, not "for alterations and repairs," not for sale, not with "a lease to

be disposed of," but broken up, and gone, gone for ever, with its little doll Cinderellas and Blue Beards, Dick Whittingtons, Beauty and Beast, all the doll-and-pasteboard company, and most of the living company, too, that constituted the players and the audience.

To the earliest days of Thespis in the nursery and these puppet performances just recorded, illustrating as did the latter so many of the dear old fairy tales, and all written in verse, I may fairly attribute my first inclination towards the lighter form of drama, although none of my contemporaneous cousins took the theatrical fever; that is, so far as I am aware, or if they did, they very soon recovered from it, and applied themselves to the practical work of picking up gold and silver in that vast Tom Tiddler's ground whose centre is the Stock Exchange.

My Uncle Arthur had literary tastes too, and he, with a few other friendly neighbours and visitors, formed a small society, meeting at one another's houses and reading aloud their stories and poems, which they subscribed to have printed privately and presented to friends. One volume only have I seen of this work, which must be almost priceless on account of its extreme rarity. Whether there ever was a second volume no one acquainted with the first has ever taken the trouble to ascertain, otherwise I must at some time or other have heard of it. The unique collection of which I speak was called, I fancy,

"Mildred" something or other. Much later on, being enthusiastic on this subject, I induced my favourite cousins (the George Burnands, in whose company I spent most of my holiday, who lived in Sussex Square when my father moved to Sussex Place) to form a literary *coterie* on the lines of the Stoke Newington one that had been so successful. We all wrote our stories: mine was a really ambitious story, probably quite unoriginal, and founded on something I had read; it was, I remember, received politely, not to say deferentially. But the utterly ridiculous nonsense written and read aloud by my eldest cousin, Ellen, who was brimming over with genuine fun and animal spirits, so put my magnificent effort, and every other, into the shade, that the members of the literary club were all convulsed with laughter, and being unable to take the matter seriously, the club was dissolved, and, after that first memorable gathering, ceased then and there to exist. This, however, by the way. As I pause on the doorstep before quitting Albion Road for good and all, I must take the opportunity of telling one or two "tales of my grandmother."

I have said Mrs. Burnand was a Suisse; she could speak French and German fluently. All her reading was in one or other of these two languages. English she never succeeded in acquiring. She could neither write it intelligibly nor speak it without making the most absurd mistakes. Of course this to me is

traditional, as all that I as a little boy recognised was that she "talked in such a funny manner," so that I could only with difficulty understand her, except at Christmas time, when her good wishes were emphasised, and made perfectly intelligible through the golden medium of half a sovereign. Being somewhat infirm, she remained in her arm-chair the greater part of the day, snuff-box at her side, foreign book in one hand, big coloured pocket-handkerchief in the other, wearing gold-rimmed spectacles, which she only used when reading. She was devoted to whist and, I think, to piquet; but I doubt if there were many evenings in the week without the square green-cloth table being unfolded, the candlesticks placed at opposite corners, counters being brought out, with two or three packs of the very best duty-paid cards. Then my grandmother, with a Rev. Mr. Gregory, a Mr. Schatzeler, and a fourth player whom I cannot put a name to, though I have a sort of idea that it was either Cumming or Hemming. If it was the former he used to have occasional fits of spasms, when he straightened himself out and became rigid for the space of some five minutes or so, during which time my grandmother, who was the unfortunate gentleman's partner, would lay down her cards and exchange prodigious pinches of snuff with Mr. Schatzeler, one of her opponents, while any little boy like myself who happened to be present was frowned at and told not to take any notice of the

sufferer, who, at the expiration of the usual period allotted to him for a fit, would wake up, look about for a second, say something like "Hullo!" as if surprised at finding himself there, and then, if it was his turn, proceed to play as if nothing unusual had happened to interfere with the regular course of the game.

I have mentioned the Rev. Mr. Gregory. He was a regular visitor at Albion Road, but whether he had a curacy or a living in the neighbourhood, or was a clergyman unattached, I have no idea. What I do remember is his very Jewish face, his glossy black ringlets, his low waistcoat and white tie in the day-time, and in the evening the only change in his attire, which would nowadays be considered horribly unclerical, was that he wore patent leather dancing pumps with bows, and the front of his shirt was decorated with a very finely got up frill. His costume reminded me of that worn by Mr. Noble, the dancing master already mentioned, and indeed the Rev. Mr. Gregory was generally spoken of as "the dancing parson." Also, he wore a "fob," that is, a small watch-pocket, in the waistband of the trousers, whence dangled some gold seals suspended by a black riband. By the way, my eldest uncle, George, wore this sort of costume until very late in life (he was over ninety when he died); in fact, I doubt whether he ever altered the style of his pantaloons or frilled shirt fronts.

This Rev. Mr. Gregory was what was not only a "dancing parson," but also a card-playing parson. Whether he was popular or not with his parishioners, if he had any, I have never heard; but I am sure that he was considered by my grandmother only in the light of being always available to make a fourth at whist, or to take a hand against dummy, to bring all the news of the neighbours, and amuse her with plenty of gossip, spiced no doubt with a pinch or two of scandal, over a cup of tea taken with some beautiful hot buttered toast (this was a real treat for me) at about five o'clock on a winter's afternoon.

When my grandmother was thought by her doctor to be seriously ill, Mr. Gregory, calling as an old friend to inquire after her health, was (I remember being told) most grieved to hear of her sad state of health, and it suddenly occurring to him that, in his clerical capacity, he might administer professionally such consolation as did not fall within the scope of the medical practitioner's art, he was shown into her room, and found her sitting up in her arm-chair, the French book in one hand and the bandana in the other, the snuff-box being on the table at her side, just as usual. She laid aside the French novel and took her snuff-box.

"Ah! my dear Mister Grregorry" (quite this number of "r's" in the name as she pronounced it, sounding them gutturally), "I am not ve-ry vell."

Here she offers her snuff-box, and he takes his usual complimentary pinch.

"I have come to see you, my dear madam," says he in his suavest and gravest manner, "and to ask you, er—to consider—the—er—serious state—of health in which you—er—now 'are.'"

"My dear Mis-ter Grrregorry," she replies, "dat vat you zay is l'affaire—ze af-fair of my médecin."

"Ah! my dear madam" (they were always so polite then!), "I do not come to—er—interfere with the—er—doctor's province . . . I speak as, a—er—clergyman. Now, if I can talk to you—or read the Bible—or—er—in any way"—

His brief address was cut short by a very distinct "hum," uttered by my grandmother, who, after inhaling a tremendous pinch of snuff, shut her eyes, used her red pocket-handkerchief, nattily dusted any particles of snuff from her lace collar, and then, smoothing her black satin dress, leaned forward, and looking Mr. Gregory straight in the face, asked: "Mr. Grrregorry, my dear, vas it a pleasant dance you had last night at ze barty vere you vos?"

That was all. The Rev. Mr. Gregory followed her lead, as he had been ever accustomed to do when her partner at whist, and never again repeated his attempt at performing the part of a minister of religion in this very astute old lady's presence.

In writing to her married daughters (and I remember to have heard of her as an excellent, though some-

what puzzling, correspondent, in consequence of her mixing up French, English, Italian, and German), she never could punctuate at all correctly. This, of course, made the muddle worse confounded. One of her daughters remonstrated with her. Her mother took it quite seriously, bestowing her utmost attention on the lesson, and taking it in through her nose (as Joey Ladle took the wine fumes in "through the pores"), with numberless pinches of snuff.

"I will not forget dese stops. You shall see." And she did not. The very next letter that her eldest daughter received from her only differed from the previous ones inasmuch as it was written *without any punctuation at all!*

"Oh!" exclaimed my aunt impatiently, "it is worse than ever!" And she was about to put it down unread when some curious hieroglyphics on a loose sheet accompanying the letter, attracted her attention. "What on earth is this?" she exclaimed, regarding in utter astonishment the paper over which apparently curious insects previously dipped in ink had been crawling. There were row after row of commas, colons, semicolons, notes of admiration, notes of interrogation, dashes, and so forth—a mixed lot of about a hundred or so all told—and at the foot were these lines in my grandmother's small-foreign handwriting-

"My dear you complain yourself that I put not some virgules ce que vous nommez stops to the words

that I write in my letter to you voilà I send to you un tas de virgules points and all that which is of the best and you will be able to place them just where you please ça vous ira ma chère Julie n'est ce pas."

On one occasion a M. Hauzmann, a very dirty, untidy German, a professional pianist and occasionally a last resort when my grandmother was hard up for a fourth at whist, complained that he could not take his usual place in the rubber as he had such a cruelly bad headache.

My grandmother being disappointed of her game, and perhaps doubting the truth of the excuse, said to him, "*Ah, mon cher Monsieur Hauzmann, Je vous donnerai une ordonnance. Rentrez chez vous, prenez un bain chaud, très chaud*" . . . then she added slyly while relishing a pinch of snuff, "*et ça . . . avec beaucoup de savon.*"

She outlived my grandfather by some years, and I remember hearing of her death while I was at my third school. I also distinctly remember being told by my Uncle Arthur how he and my Aunt Antoinette ("Toney") were both present at their mother's last moments; how she dozed a great deal, but in her wakeful intervals was perfectly sensible, conversing freely with those who were present; and invariably, the ruling passion being strong in her to the last, asking for her snuff-box and taking a pinch with the greatest possible relish. Indeed, with her very latest

breath she requested that they would move her into a sitting position in bed propped up by pillows and supported by the arm of her devoted and favourite son Arthur. Thus sitting in bed she made a sign for her snuff-box, which was at once handed to her. "Then," as my uncle related, "she let it drop on the counterpane, her right hand fell at the same time; I heard one long sigh of relief, and there was the end."

Not so very long after this the house was given up, and brother and sister came to London.

London was a difficulty to my aunt, who loved the semblance, at least, of a country life. As she could never be happy without a garden, a dog, a horse and open trap (she was a born coach-woman), and some sort of a place representing a miniature farmyard, with egg-laying hens which in company ("limited") of a real live cow could provide the household with such luxuries, in the way of real new-laid eggs and genuine milk, as London could not find it in its heart to give, my aunt's proclivities had to be considered; and so brother, with his artistic tastes and his love for town, and sister, with her love for country, met each other half-way, and most happily pitched upon a house in the suburbs, at that time quite countrified, and at the very corner of Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park. This house stood well away from the main road, that is the old turnpike road, close to the toll gate (fancy a turnpike gate in South

Kensington!¹), which had two "bars" (there was a kind of village "public" near with "refreshment for man and beast," but I don't include this), of which one prevented travellers, carters, coaches, and so forth entering town from the western country-side without payment, or without showing their ticket from their last 'pike, while the other brought those to a standstill who were journeying to London from the south-west. Here they hit upon a delightful old-fashioned house that, having probably "once upon a time" been a small farm, still showed some evidences of its original purpose in having retained a large garden, good stabling, a poultry yard, small grazing meadow for the cow, and a paddock.

This quite reconciled my aunt to being so close to London, where, had she consulted her own tastes, she would never have chosen to reside. Arthur's tastes, however, were artistic; he loved pictures and their painters, music and musicians, was himself a very fair tenor; and while at Albion Road the pair used to give Sunday evening concerts, in which from time to time some more or less distinguished professional friends used to take part.

I was taken to the opera by my father very early

¹ "The Kensington turnpike" was on the high road out of London, along which Mr. Pickwick, his companions, and Sam Weller with Captain and Mrs. Dowler, rode together in one of the four-horse'd coaches that took this route to Bath, starting early in the morning from the White Horse Cellar, Piccadilly, and arriving at their destination about seven o'clock in the evening. *Pickwick* was written between 1836 and 1837.

in life. He patronised Covent Garden with Grisi and Mario, while Arthur and Theophilus (who came second in the family list of uncles) were strong partisans of Her Majesty's, with Jenny Lind and Lablache as the great attractions (Lablache was an enormous attraction, being Falstaffian in size and weight . . . and to think that the *Merry Wives of Windsor* was not composed until long after the only man who could, in every sense, have filled the part was dead and buried!), with I rather fancy Lumley at the head of affairs,—but it may have been even before his time. The Stoke Newingtonites looked on Covent Garden as, from an operatic point of view, heretical; while in the opinion of the Covent Gardenites there were no singers to be named in the same breath with Grisi and Mario, nor any orchestra equal to that of which Costa was the conductor. My father always waxed very warm over this matter, and I rather fancy that, as there were three to one against him, and more than that when musical guests, all with Jenny Lindian proclivities, were present, he found himself in so decided a minority as to reduce his personality to a mere cipher. To me he would confide, without fear of contradiction, his sentiments of contempt for the musical opinions he had been forced to listen to, as we drove back to town in the snug brougham, while he soothed his ruffled feelings with a fragrant cigar, and listened to my filial

and courtier-like remarks, which it is needless to say were in entire agreement with every expression of the paternal taste and sentiment. But this was when I was between twelve and thirteen. Between thirteen and fourteen I was actually permitted to join my father in a cigar, just by way of a treat, he having previously discovered that I with my cousins and a young friend or so from school had acquired a taste for his Havannahs. Thus I began smoking early. I am not aware that it has done me any particular harm, but neither has it done me any particular good. However, "the faculty" are, I believe, unanimous in insisting that the later in life smoking is taken to, the better for the smoker; that moderate smoking is better still; and no smoking best of all. *Soit.* I remember the few occasions of my being permitted to indulge in this luxury, and how I thought what a man it made of me, for at least half an hour or so,—I was never ill from smoking,—and as I recall these episodes, Albion Road, operatic discussions, the brougham, the cigars, the drive home at night, all suddenly fade away out of my memory! I fancy the utter rout and defeat of my father in the Jenny Lind controversy settled the matter, and here the curtain falls for good and all on scenes in the family life at Stoke Newington, a place I have not since revisited except, now I think of it, once, when I rode there just to see how much of the place I could recognise. There was so

little left of the original that, but for one or two landmarks, such as the old church and the name of Church Street, I should have quietly ridden through it without recalling a single association of a childhood and a boyhood to whose happiness this place had, in a general way, greatly contributed.

CHAPTER II

AN INTERIM CHAPTER—TEN MINUTES ALLOWED
—DISCURSIVE—CONCERNING SOME MUSIC
AND DANCES — CHATTERTON, HARPIST
JULLIEN — POLKAMANIA — ALBERT SMITH
PIATTI—KOENIG—ABBÉ LISZT

I HAD always been interested in music, and as quite "a mere boy" I had been frequently taken to concerts and musical entertainments at Hanover Square Rooms, where I well remember hearing Thalberg play. He had a quiet, easy style with, as it seemed to me, marvellous finish, and held his audience entranced. Another pianist of quite a different "order of merit," but, I believe, in the very first rank of her profession, was Madame Dulcken. I have never forgotten her appearance on the raised dais. My memory (that of a boy of about seven or eight years old, I suppose) preserves her (and a remarkably well-preserved woman she is, and perhaps was at the very time I saw her) "in my mind's eye" as a very fine woman, not tall, but inclined to *embonpoint*, with small, chubby, dimpled hands, and magnificent

arms bare up to the shoulders, and shining like tinted ivory against the background of a deep purple-dyed velvet dress. She wore glittering bracelets, that she removed before playing, and then, *incedit regina*, she went to work in a regal, nay, in an imperial style, that showed the keys no mercy, whacking, so to speak, the tune out of them, and creating a marvellously brilliant effect in musical pyrotechnics. I remember the enthusiasm that, testifying to the delight of her admirers, seemed to salute her with the hearty Irish wish of "More power to your elbow." I must have heard her on not a few occasions, and this is the impression I have of her playing as compared with Thalberg's.

Chatterton on the harp I heard, and in Jullien's time Herr von Koenig on the *cornet-a-piston*. This was when the polka had just come into fashion, and was all the rage everywhere. At Vauxhall out in the open, at Cremorne, at the Argyll Rooms, and the other dancing places of more or less repute, at every ball, "hop," or party in Belgravia, Tyburnia, or Bohemia, everybody was polka mad. The "polkamania" seized everybody. There wasn't a ballet or extravaganza without its being danced in costume, and words set to its tune. *The Man in the Moon*, Albert Smith's comic paper, published a polka of its own, following the example previously set by Mr. Punch, not in a Christmas number, but in one, if I remember rightly, appearing about Christmas time.

The *valse à deux temps*, which ousted the *valse à trois temps*, never created so great a *furore* as did the introduction of the polka. It was the crowning effort of "Mons." Jullien at his monster concerts, and Koenig must nearly have blown his brains out in his strenuous efforts to comply with the vociferous encores called for by audience and dancers on the floor of Covent Garden Opera House during the Jullien era.

To account for the universal popularity of the polka is easy. It was a case of the masses *versus* the classes, and the masses won. Why? Simply because the polka appealed to that vast majority of dancers everywhere, in all grades of society, who, especially in the case of the male dancers, find it utterly impossible to keep their heads in a valse, especially with a fast partner and one who is "game" to go on as long as life and music last, but by strict attention to business can jog along comfortably to four-in-a-bar time, and, becoming assured of safety, can indulge in a few fancy steps, backing, reversing, and even changing arms *ad lib.* The mildest-mannered man that ever figured in a galop at the finish of a quadrille, or a country dance, soon discovered that he could easily acquire a reputation as quite a gay votary of Terpsichore by learning and dancing the polka. "The new polka" was a social leveller, not in the sense that the mad *galop* or fast *valse* had been, when the inefficient, who

soon lost his head, concluded a succession of bumps by sprawling on the floor, dragging his unhappy victim of a partner with him, but as a sort of go-as-you-please-in-four time dance which would let in a lot of outsiders; and so for one who sat out after a quadrille and waited patiently for another, there were now fifty, who, at the sound of the polka, started up, obtained partners, and danced for all they were worth, and more.

The *valse à deux temps* came in as a relief, but for many years the polka held its own, and, danced in a comparatively free-and-easy manner in the disguise of polka-mazurka or modern schottische (the old one was "tricky"), it still figures occasionally in the evening programme of our own day, especially on the Continent.

The dance has led me away from music and its exponents.

I have mentioned two celebrated pianists whom I remember, and Koenig, the exquisite performer on the *cornet-à-piston*. Piatti, the little violoncello-player, with whom, through my uncle's stringed quartette evenings, I had "scraped" acquaintance, is of a later date; he was a queer little person, rather "a gay dog" when you came to know him, and one of the "Joachim Quartette."

With Madame Schumann in later years I had a slight acquaintance. Her playing was delicious, her feeling exquisite. She never could completely

master English. One day, in early spring, I remember well complimenting her on looking so well. She was sitting by the fire and had not been out. She replied—

“Ach, my dear friend, I am not vell. I ave send for doctor; he tell me der is someding de madder mit my ins.”

After that I made a rule of inquiring most affectionately after madame's “ins.”

The most interesting figure among all the musicians with whom I have had but a passing acquaintance was the Abbé Liszt. His work I knew; of his career I had heard much. His history in the past was public property. His temperament had crossed his genius, and only in the last years of his life, on the occasion of his second visit to this country, when “repentant ashes” had been strewn upon his head in the shape of his long, thick, white locks, and when he had devoted himself mainly, if not entirely, to sacred music, did we in England see the gentle, amiable musician, whom all who knew him loved, the venerable Abbé Liszt.

For an hour or more have I sat entranced, as at the house of a friend where he stayed during his last visit to London, Liszt sat at the piano while his fingers wandered in rhapsody over the keys. He was repeating his own compositions, he was taking almost unconsciously fresh themes, developing them and playing on, holding us all spellbound in silence.

That was such playing as never before have I heard, as never in this world do I expect to hear again. It was in its way a realisation of Dr. Newman's well-known glorification of music. On this occasion Liszt did not descend from his platform in our friend's private concert room to be congratulated, but while the last sweet notes of his playing were yet lingering in our ears, he quitted his seat, and, by a side door in the gallery, disappeared. Our host, on bidding us good-night, apologised for his guest's not being with him to receive our congratulations, thanks, and adieux, but the playing had overcome him, and this truly "grand old man" had thus bidden us, silently, but eloquently, farewell. That evening is indelible in my memory.

On the next occasion I met him at St. James's Hall, at a concert given in his honour. I was glad to be of some use to him in London, as, not wishing to attract attention by publicly appearing at mass on Sunday, he was enabled, by the courteous kindness of the Oratorian Fathers, to hear mass from the private "tribune" in their church. By the way, I may mention that the Abbé was not a priest, nor had he ever gone farther in the ecclesiastical state than taking the "tonsure," a step that everywhere entitled him to the title of "M. L'Abbé," that is "The Reverend," and enabled him to hold certain clerical appointments (at the wish of Pius IX., who was one of his great admirers), without any of the obliga-

tions attached to the "sacred orders" of subdeacon, deacon, and priest. Beyond this first step he never went.

In this discursive chapter I have mentioned the Hanover Square Rooms, where I first heard Madame Dülcken. Here also in my very early days I heard the marvellous John Parry, but as I had the great pleasure of his personal acquaintance in later life, I will keep back my recollections of him until I come to mention the German Reeds, Arthur Cecil Blunt, Corney Grain, and the many other "entertainers" whom I have known and whose *forte* was the piano. The "operatics" shall have a space to themselves.

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This variation being ended, I return to the original theme.

CHAPTER III

DOMESTIC MATTERS—TALES OF TWO FAMILIES —AUNTS AND UNCLES—INTRODUCTORY STUDIES—DICKENS—DRAMA—EARLY TASTES —MUSIC AND MARRIAGE

I BELIEVE we have a right to reckon two poets on my mother's side of our family tree, namely, Abraham and Hannah Cowley. I am the more inclined to think this is correct on account of some names in the Cowley family, two generations ago, having been more or less biblical or "Bunyany"; for instance, there was a "Christian" Cowley, which savours of the *Pilgrim's Progress*; then there was "Samuel," more than one "Hannah," and others that I am quite sure had a certain biblical smack about them, but which have escaped my memory. They were a decidedly handsome family, the Cowleys. The eldest girl, my Aunt Harriet, was a very sweet-looking woman, as I remember her, dressed in the costume worn by ladies of that or perhaps rather an earlier period, with which the old original illustrations to *Nickolas Nickleby* by Hablot K. Brown ("Phiz") have made all students of Dickens familiar. I re-

member her rather short skirts, showing the neatest possible ankles and such shapely feet in the daintiest of Cinderella-like shoes. Harriet (how rarely one comes across this name nowadays!) had been a great beauty. She married a Mr. Clement Wigney, whose appearance, with his well-arranged rather iron-grey hair, his full whiskers, his dandified costume, and rather rakish style, is recalled to me by "Phiz's" pictures of Sir Mulberry Hawke. Of course my uncle, Clement Wigney, was a superior and gentlemanly variation of that Dickensian "rip," that is, as I recollect him. He was always a great favourite of mine, though I regarded him with awe, as one who seemed to belong to a world totally distinct from that inhabited by Mr. and Mrs. Cowley, in whose house he and my aunt resided *en permanence*, though he, having a large acquaintance and being probably a club man, or having a great many friends in club-land in those early days (of which territory I knew nothing), was away very frequently; but on most Thursdays, which was the day in every week consecrated by my father to dining at my grandfather's, and which was my "afternoon out" at the same house, I generally remember Clement Wigney sitting in his usual place at the dinner-table when I came in to bid the world good-night, and be taken off home by my nurse, who had been announced by Mr. Muzzle, the butler (isn't that a Pickwickian name?), as "having come to fetch Master Frank."

If it was at home that Master Frank first acquired a taste for Dickens by reading *Pickwick* when it was brought out in weekly numbers (at least I certainly remember it in this form), to be bound up in monthly parts, it was at Park Crescent that he cultivated it, as it was here that for the first time he saw the illustrated edition, over which the same little Master Frank would be literally doubled up with laughter, thereby causing the greatest merriment to his dear Aunt Clara, who had the pleasantest laugh in the world, and considerable astonishment to his grandmother, who would stop in the midst of her embroidery work, to inquire "what on earth the boy was laughing at," and on being told, and the passage being read to her, she would enjoy it immensely. Under Clara's supervision I became acquainted with all sorts of literature, through the medium of an entertaining scrap-book she had compiled; and as she was no mean artist in water-colours, I followed her lead, and having been presented with a superior "box of paints" I set to work on highly colouring most of the pictures in such illustrated books as were within my reach.

Whereas I daubed prints and read Dickens at Mrs. Cowley's, at my other grandmother's I read old plays in volumes bound up, entitled "The British Theatre," in which I found *The Hundred Pound Note* (and cried with laughing over the low comedy of

Billy Black), *Pizarro*, *The Bronze Horse*, and many others, which have long since escaped my memory, and which I have never heard of as being revived on the stage. Fortunately the books that I read at home were my own, presented to me at various times by kind aunts and uncles; for, oddly enough, never can I remember my father giving me any books, nor have I any record of his having done so. My mother, who was Miss Emma Cowley, next after Harriet, must have been a considerable reader, chiefly of serious poetry, as I have some of her books, with notes and queries in her handwriting. But all my Cowley aunts were clever, all read a great deal, all were good amateur artists above the average, but none of them were musicians. Literature and painting were represented by the Cowley side, and drama and music by the Burnand side of the united forces represented by my mother and father. Both families appreciated humour; but the two were, however, far apart, and the members of each knew very little of one another. I have heard of a visit of ceremony, when one grandmother called on, or left cards on, the other grandmother. But they were miles asunder, and from Newington to Park Crescent was too great a distance for more than an annual visit. Never was little boy treated more kindly or tipped more handsomely, and with greater regularity, than was the writer of these reminiscences. Of such kindnesses the memory lasts a lifetime, and

the lesson of "go and do likewise" has not, I trust, been lost upon me. At the recurrence of every return to school I became a juvenile "collector," officially, so to speak, visiting my uncles, aunts, and my grandmother, though only the one in town could be favoured with a call (by me) *at* her house, and *on* her purse. With great prudence my father received and stored up any presents in money that were made to me on my birthdays by Mr. and Mrs. Cowley; and as they had commenced when I was six, I received quite a nice little sum on my leaving Eton, when I was between sixteen and seventeen. I wonder what I did with it?

Mrs. Cowley was the only one of that family that lived to a great age and kept all her faculties up to the very last. To the latest hour of her life, as long as she could be in the drawing-room, she continued her embroidery, and by the aid of spectacles read the newspaper regularly every day. She was an excellent woman, most kind, unaffectedly religious and broad-minded, although she viewed with some disfavour the "Puseyites" (there were no "Ritualists" then) of her time, and would confide to me, with a smile of toleration, that my Aunt Harriet, who, on becoming a widow, lived in comparative seclusion (and indeed I rarely, if ever, set eyes on her after I was about eighteen years of age), had devoted herself to Church work of some sort, which required of her very little physical

exercise beyond what was necessary to enable her to descend and ascend the staircase and step into and out of the carriage, of which, for the greater part of the day, she had the exclusive use, my grandmother taking her airing in it for an hour or so, and, as long as she could, walking to see her married sons and their families, who lived within a short distance of her residence in Montagu Square.

So they go out of this family history, with the exception of my favourite, Aunt Clara, whom for some time after her marriage with Mr. George Bishop I never could forgive for marrying somebody else and not me, for I had always been preposterously in love with her, as she was so pretty, so sweet, so cheerful, and had such delightful curls, like David Copperfield's Dora, and had acted as quite a second mother to me, taking me out with her in the carriage for drives about London and in the Park, and always doing a great deal of shopping, which included sundry purchases at the toy-shop. None of the Cowleys were theatrical, nor do I remember them ever conversing about opera or drama ; as I have said, this portion of my education came from my father's side, and, with evidently a natural bent, I made, if not the most, at least as much as I could of it.

CHAPTER IV

MORE CLERGY — FATHER'S FRIENDS — ROUSE —
ROUGEMENT — BATH — SCHOOL — MASTER —
MISSESES — ILLNESS — SCENE — BRIGHTON —
DOMBEY — TOOTS — THE REV. MR. YOUNG —
READING THE LESSONS — ANCIENT FARCE —
AMATEUR BOYS — SIR MARTIN ARCHER SHEE,
P.R.A. — SCOTT'S NOVELS — HAMILTON WOOD-
GATE — LIGHT LITERATURE

AMONG my father's friends I remember only one clergyman. In manner and costume he did not in the least resemble a modern clergyman in 1901 of any one of the many divisions and subdivisions of the Anglican Church. I have already mentioned my grandmother's clerical friend, Mr. Gregory, as a type of the card-playing and "dancing parson," as common in London at that time as was the sporting parson of the "Jack Russell" order in the country. I should not remember Mr. Ludlow at all but by the fact of his having recommended to my father a school at Bath, kept by a friend of his, a Rev. Mr. Hutchins. So to Bath my father took me. He was, I think, accompanied by two friends; one was a very jovial young man, Mr. James Rouse,

and the other a drily humorous one, a Mr. Henry Rougemont (this family also originally came from the Pays de Vaud, and, I think, has by this time inserted "de" before the Rougemont), whom he treated as his guests, and who doubtless, with my father, highly enjoyed the pleasures of the gay city after having got rid of their charge, aged nine years old, by depositing him at Zion House, Zion Hill, in the care of the Hutchins family, to be left till called for, or sent for, at the end of the school time.

I pause to ask how did we travel to Bath, and in those days to Brighton? I remember going, once, by coach to Brighton, but I cannot recall a second similar journey. I suppose we must have gone by train to Bath at that time, and have taken about four hours over the journey. But here again my memory is entirely at fault. However, there we went, and there I was, as unhappy as ever little boy of nine could be at what was in fact his first regular school, where there were boys up to fourteen at least, and none that I remember younger than this miserable little individual. Had I read *Nicholas Nickleby* at that time, or was it afterwards, when I had made the acquaintance of a beastly cane with waxed threads round it, wielded by Mr. Hutchins, that I associated him at once, then and for ever afterwards, with the brutal Mr. Squeers? His son, fresh, very fresh, in manner and colour, from Cambridge, wearing light check trousers and a brilliant tie, also

My dear J.P.
I wish to
see
you
yesterday
from the
above
address.

Wm
J. H.



6 Dec. 95

flourished a cane merrily and with considerable spirit, not so much for purposes of punishment as just for playfully touching up a boy now and then, as an expert coachman flicks a fly off a leader's ear. I feared them both; hated lessons; detested the boys; and playtime was no relaxation.

The Misses Hutchins were most kind; there was one, the eldest, a married one,

"Whose Christian name was Sarah,"

as Albert Chevalier in his artistical impersonation of a typical "Coster" sings, and she kept her younger sisters, who were inclined to be a bit effusive, within the bounds of orderly decorum. These ladies helped in smoothing the rugged school-boy's life for me, especially during my convalescence, when practically I had retired from school business, and was only awaiting my father's orders to be conveyed home.

My illness! Shall I ever forget it! Never! It was my first histrionic attempt and my last in this particular line. I never encored it, and never wanted it to be encored.

I had "something the matter with me"—that is all I knew. What it was I haven't an idea, nor, strange to say, do I remember any medical man being called in by the Hutchinses. What portion of the drama preceded the great scene in the dormitory, where I was taken suddenly very ill, I do not in the least remember, but most distinctly do I call to mind

how at night the dimly lit dormitory was suddenly illuminated by the entire Hutchins family bringing in candles, and how around the supposed dying boy's bed the tender-hearted family all knelt in prayerful expectation of every moment being my last. Most distinctly do I call to mind how at first I wondered what on earth they were all doing, until gradually I, as the chief performer in whom the interest was centred, entered thoroughly into the spirit of the thing, and, perhaps, recalling the life and death of the unfortunate Smeke, mixed up, perhaps, with that of little Paul Dombey (who wanted to be informed what "the wild waves were saying"), I acted the part of "the dying boy" to the life, that is, to the very best of my limited ability, being at the time deeply touched by my own performance, and rather expecting to see angels hovering about my little bed, ready to bear me away, somewhere or other upwards, in their outstretched arms. The spectacle of the suffering boy must have been a sight calculated to touch the hardest heart of the most relentless schoolmaster. What on earth was the matter with me I do not know, and never have known to this day. It was a subject to which I never cared to allude. But in a very few days I was convalescent. I was not allowed to return to the schoolroom,—thank Heaven!—but was cared for by the young ladies, who took the most affectionate interest in my pro-

gress towards perfect health. After a while I used to limp about the grounds. Why limp? Some one had told me that my heel was contracted. I accepted the statement as fact, and feeling deeply grateful to the brilliant person who had suggested the idea, I adopted it at once, and limped about the grounds with a stick.

Then my father appeared on the scene and took me up to London. It was settled that Bath did not agree with me. I might have acted the part of a regretful boy who was very sorry not to be able to return and resume his studies at Bath, probably I did; but the penalty for not returning to Bath had to be paid by me in full, and Bransby Cooper, a well-known surgeon, a great friend of my father's, inspected me, and then decided that I must be "cupped" and "blistered." I remember being rather proud of this decision as proving that, after all, there *was* something the matter with me. Happily for my peace of mind I had not the most vague idea of what an "operation" meant.

So cupped and blistered I was; and I remained in bed for weeks, I believe. The suffering caused by that blister, which I remember to this day, and ever shall, decided my next move, which was, that, on leaving that couch, *nothing should be the matter with my spine or leg*; that I would never again attempt such a highly successful performance as I had given, with quite an exceptional run, and would walk liter-

ally upright and straight, physically and morally, all the days of my life.

So I got quite well ; walked masterfully, and but for an occasional weakness in the left leg (so perhaps it wasn't all so entirely shamming as I thought it, and there was some foundation for the lame leg to go upon) have never had any trouble in that department from that time of life up to now.

A fresh-coloured dandified doctor, Mr. Harrison, of Brook Street, was the general practitioner consulted, and with Bransby Cooper (a very hard nut to crack was old Bransby) he gave his opinion that sea air was required for my physical and mental development, and that of all places Brighton was the one.

But at that time, 1846, Brighton was the only seaside place with anything like a fashionable reputation. Margate was popular, and Ramsgate was fairly fashionable in a middle-class away, *teste* Charles Dickens. So to Brighton my father took me ; we stopped at the Albion Hotel, where he was evidently very well known and heartily welcomed.

Thalatta ? Thalatta ! I saw the sea for the first time ! From that moment I loved it, and to this love, with enforcedly long intervals, I have been ever true. "My heart is true to the sea," but not to Brighton. After my school time was ended there, and after some subsequent holiday visits, I never cared to make any stay at Brighton, though on occasion I have remained there for a few nights.

So to school, kept by the Rev. Mr. Roberts in Sussex Square, Kemp Town,—M.A., I believe, of Trinity, Dublin, but this was *not* announced,—I was taken. With the exception of Mr. Roberts not being a bit like Dr. Blimber, that there was no parallel to Cornelia, and that there was nobody in the slightest degree resembling Mrs. Pipchin, Dr. Roberts' school was a counterpart of Dr. Blimber's. We had a "Toots," whose name was Thomas Harding, the son of a Manchester man, the eldest boy there, who affected bright colours, and was called "Pussy" by the senior usher, the only man who dared take such a liberty, on account of Harding being much engaged in cultivating a very fine-drawn dusky line of moustache, on which, during school time, he used to keep watchful eyes by means of a looking-glass fixed inside the lid of his desk; and we had a "Traddles" with rebellious hair, always in trouble, the hair and its owner, though, by the way, Traddles belongs to *David Copperfield*, and so I must admit that Mr. Roberts' school was, to my mind, somewhat a medley of the two Dickensian schools, one in *Dombey* and the other in *David Copperfield*. We had Mr. Jakes Wamby (who could forget such a name?), the senior usher, directly out of *Dombey*, and in the second usher we had Mr. Patey, representing, flute and all, "Mr. Mell," straight from the pages of Dickens.

Mr. Wamby had large fox-coloured whiskers, a

Roman nose (which was his strong point as a master of the classics), dressed gaily in a brown cut-away coat, rather sporting, with brass buttons, a light tie, and cheerful trousers; while, on the other hand, Mr. Patey's costume was mournful in tone, and his manner was as gentle as Mr. Wamby's was buoyant. Mr. Wamby was the one who alone seemed undismayed at table during breakfast, dinner, and tea by the presence of Mrs. Roberts, our headmaster's wife, while he assumed the most courtly air when taking snuff and addressing a quiet old lady with a swollen vein in the centre of her forehead, who was Lady Roberts, the mother of our headmaster, of an Irish Protestant family, and, as was her son, an enthusiastic "Evangelical." Not that any of us youngsters knew any difference between a Low, Broad, or High Churchman, and in those early years we never so much as heard the term. On Sundays we were marched two and two (quite Blimber over again this) to a church in Kemp Town, where one Mr. Venn Elliott used to preach; always in a black gown, and I only mention this now, as I suppose the Genevan gown and bands are seldom seen in the pulpit. In those ancient Brighton days, too, the officiating clergy were in a three-decker, just as I had seen them in the Regent Street chapel-of-ease, when taken there of an afternoon by my father.

By the way, *à propos* of the "three-deckers," I may

here mention that once, much later, and after I had left the Kemp Town school, I was staying with my cousins, the Henry Burnands, at Brighton, when on Sunday morning we were all trouped off to attend morning service at some church where a Reverend Mr. Young, the son of a well-known tragedian of the Kemble school, was announced as reading the lessons, while a great preacher, one Mr. Montgomery, was to deliver the sermon. I forget the sermon, but I shall never forget the Rev. Mr. Young's reading of the first lesson. It was most dramatic. Our attention (and none of us were particularly attentive) was riveted on him. He took in the whole congregation at a glance; he directed his eyes so that each particular person feeling himself, or herself, addressed, thenceforth became intensely interested. The lesson was about the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (I trust I have the names correct, but they are near enough, and will be easily recognised), and he made his "great hit" with the climax to which he led up most artistically. He looked about after a pause, and then impressively he declaimed, without further reference to the book, which would have detracted from the effect—

"The earth opened"—

We were all thunderstruck. Although we were familiar with the story, yet this tremendous "situation" had never before struck the audience, I mean the congregation, so terribly.

He paused again, the earth had opened ; we saw the scene ; we dared hardly anticipate the *dénouement*. He continued, as very slowly he lifted up the side of the book with his right hand, " And (*pause*) the earth (*pause—then very slowly*) swallowed them up!" and here he perceptibly shuddered, closed his eyes as if to hide from his vision the dreadful spectacle, and then closed the book with a sharp snap (as if bottling up Korah and Co. for ever), and then the congregation breathed again as Mr. Young, having quite recovered from the effect of his own dramatic rendering, proceeded with the following portion of the morning service.

At Mr. Roberts' school, what I specially remember was making great friends with a boy somewhat older than myself named Hamilton Woodgate, who, not being as strong as most other boys, used to be excused cricket and the rough-and-tumble games, and would spend most of his time in reading the Waverley novels. Hamilton, I, and another, but his name escapes me, used to put all the forms together in the schoolroom at Brighton, and, during play hours, when the weather did not permit our games in the field (about a quarter of a mile from the house), we used to perform, on this improvised stage, our private version of *Box and Cox*, which had just then made a great hit in London, and which we had been taken to see during the holidays. How venerable is Madison Morton's farce! Still to this day it enjoys a

measure of popularity to which Arthur Sullivan and myself added a fresh impulse. But that is another story, and "we shall see it later."

The only person of any artistic distinction whom I can call to mind as being among my father's occasional visiting friends were the Shee family, of which the head was Sir Martin Archer Shee, President of the Royal Academy (1846), a patriarchal-looking and most amiable old gentleman, with a long white beard and very white hair, upon whom I was taken, to call at Brighton, and also in London, at Cavendish Square, where, I fancy, Sir Martin lived. My father was wont to amuse them with some nonsense Italian songs, to which he played his own accompaniment of a few chords, and as I distinctly remember he imitated what evidently he considered to be an ecclesiastical kind of monotone chant, supposed to be sung by a priest when saying, or rather, singing mass, with an attendant boy as "server," only that he did not use the proper Latin, with which it is more than probable my father was totally ignorant. The exemplary cleric, a creation of my father's imagination, was represented by him as, during mass, addressing asides to "the little rascal" (an address of endearment which my father was very fond of using when speaking of me to a third party present), and ordering his *déjeuner à la fourchette*, with, of course, a bottle of wine to wash down various delicacies after he had finished officiating. On my

learning afterwards that all the Shees were Catholics of an old Irish Catholic family, I could not but wonder at their so politely listening to, nay, applauding my father, and laughing heartily at his musical efforts. They liked him evidently very much, and he them; but why on earth he should have chosen as a subject for ridicule the most sacred rite of their religion is what has, since, frequently puzzled me, though at the time, being so young and totally inexperienced in Church matters, I did not in the least understand the *portée* of his improvisation. Nor, though I have never forgotten it and can picture him at the piano, the venerable Sir Martin, the amused audience, and the very old-fashioned room where it took place, was I ever at any time, and I heard it more than once, particularly amused by it. Very young as I was, it did not seem to me quite the proper subject for such handling, although, owing to the inherited Vaudois spirit I was brought up in the general idea that all priests were "hum-bugs," and if ever pope, cardinals, or any Roman ecclesiastics were mentioned in the course of conversation by my uncles and aunts (who had been educated in Protestant schools abroad, and who in the slack time of business very often took a holiday tour on the Continent), it was always as being mere actors in a show, taking pleasure in gulling the people, and making out of it "a fat and happy living."

And, while on this subject, I may confidently affirm that never at any period within my recollection have I deliberately sneered at or tried to find a subject for ridicule in anyone's professed religion, no matter whether the persons themselves either did not act up to their profession or laughed at the tenets they ought to have revered. Seeing the absurd side of most things, I have never been able to scoff at what appear to many as ridiculous details which are mere accidents of any form of religion, although for Tartuffes, Stigginses, Achillis, and suchlike impostors, who make a hypocritical pretence of religion as a cloak for their immoralities, the severest ridicule, the most scathing satire, and punishment the most condign is thoroughly well deserved. I make this note remembering how astonished I was that our worthy schoolmaster, rector of Paul's Cray, on his return from attending the opening of a new church at Chislehurst, should have been so startlingly bitter against the appearance of a number of his brother clergymen in their surplices, when he and a few others stuck to their black academical gown and bands. It was the first time I had been brought into anything like close contact, as it were, with "Puseyites" and "Puseyism," of which, if I knew anything at all, I had learnt it from the columns of "Mr. Punch" who, at that time, seemed to consider it a duty to go out of his way to denounce the High Church movement. Yet I very much

doubt whether any one of his staff understood it, from Thackeray, who subsequently expressed his regret at his share in the attack that had caused Mr. Punch the loss of one of his most delightfully clever artists, Dicky Doyle, to Professor Leigh, who was, if anything, a Swedenborgian, and obstinately illogical even at that. I have no sort of inclination to laugh at a Brahmin, a Mohammedan, a Hindoo, a Protestant of any denomination, on account of his creed. And, as for the Jew, directly I arrived at years of discretion I perceived very clearly that Fagin was not a representative Hebrew, and was glad to see that Dickens had made the *amende honorable* by drawing that charming picture of Mr. Riah, the long-suffering servant of "Fascination Fledgeby," the vulgar, scheming, mean, money-lending Christian.

Very few things do I remember of any importance at Brighton except Brill's Baths, where I learnt swimming, and perfectly detested the lessons and the round-faced, dark, close-shaven, broken-nosed man who taught us. Then there was Mohammed's Gymnasium, which was a real recreation, especially the giant stride-swing; and riding, which I commenced to learn on a small pony with a soft padded saddle. Then my piano lessons (the one thing my father insisted on my keeping up wherever I might be), which only one or two other boys took with me, were given by a Miss Stuckey, a very kind and prim lady; while my drawing master was Mr. Booty, a very round,

short, plump man, with shiny face, bright spacious freckles, and curly, black and much oiled hair, who used to rap our knuckles with a ruler and hum tunes while he was drawing. These two last characters were especially Dickensian, at least so it seemed to me, as indeed were all persons more or less so who possessed anything approaching a "singularity" about them. I remember the pastry-cook's at Kemp Town, near Sussex Square, where we used to buy our buns after gymnastics and bathing; also that, for her own two children Mrs. Roberts employed as resident governess a handsome and very plump young woman, of a decidedly Spanish type in accordance with her name, which was Cordova—Miss Cordova—and with whom our eldest young man, "Pussy" Harding, was popularly believed to be madly in love. Then there was Miss Cordova's chum, our housekeeper, Miss Mackenzie, a neat little woman, with a rather hard, apple-reddish face, to whom most of the younger boys made desperate love when she used to brush our hair and see to the general tidiness of our appearance before meal-times. She had the superintendence of the dormitories, and used to retire to rest when she was of opinion that we were all asleep. Sometimes when we were giving dramatic performances, in our sort of junior Druid night-dresses, she would enter suddenly, when we would plunge into our beds, and all be fast asleep in less than a second; but once or twice, on her inquiring

what we had been doing, and insisting on the truth, we confessed that under my personal stage management the "Bed-ouin" *troupe* had been performing a play which must have been not very distantly related, in its primitive characteristics, to that performed by Bottom the Weaver and his company of amateur bumpkins by royal command. So Miss Mackenzie summoned Miss Cordova, and took possession of a front seat while we gave some sort of childish entertainment that sent these two ladies into fits of uncontrollable laughter. It was cut very short by our housekeeper declaring we were making enough noise to bring down upon us (and upon themselves too) Mr. and Mrs. Roberts, who occupied the front part of the house; and so the show was brought to an abrupt conclusion, and we were soon all asleep and tucked up in our little cots.

In this dormitory there was not a single boy—no, not one solitary one, save myself—who did not regularly walk and talk, talk or walk in his sleep. Fact. I have never seen such a sight. It was a sort of spectral party. They were all in a hurry, that was the curious part of it. One of them, a Kinnaird, whose bed was next to the window, used to hurry up, stand looking out at it, the blind up, and quietly setting his watch by the distant church clock, which he couldn't possibly have seen even had he been wide awake. He knew where to look for it; and the spire was visible. The other somnambulistic boys all

"walked and talked" or stayed in bed and talked. One violently quarrelled with some one invisible and inaudible, to whom he used to give very short replies ; another cried and sobbed ; another laughed ; and one boy of an undecided turn when asleep used to get out of bed, walk to the washhand stand, make a feint at the jug, and walk back again dolefully. I never saw such a set ; quite harmless, but at first very startling. If I walked in my sleep I must have done it when they had all finished, as there wasn't room for me when they were all out and about.

I fancy, looking back at the uneventful school-days at Brighton, that I was not sorry to hear that Mr. Roberts had accepted a small living at Paul's Cray, in Kent, where he would continue to take a few pupils in order to prepare them for the public schools. My father having determined that I was to go to Eton, and Mr. Woodgate having settled that his son Hamilton, my chum, was to go to Harrow, we were both included in the select few with whom Mr. Roberts decided to start in his rectory at Paul's Cray, Kent.

And all that I remember as notable about this transition is that I had to call at my father's city office *en route*, and there was introduced to several gentlemen, who were doing business with my father, and that I thought them, generally speaking, an odd set, including a Mr. Pemberton, with very long legs and very big straggling whiskers (like those of Mr. Smangle in the illustration to *Pickwick* in the Fleet), a

stout German, Baron Steinberg, and one or two other eccentricities, all with mannerisms, and all ignoring my presence, as being more or less of an intruder and having nothing whatever to do with business, until such time as the very sharp but unhealthy-looking head clerk, with a wart on his nose, one Mr. Smith, took charge of me bodily, when they bade me, perfunctorily, "good-bye." Then per cab, per omnibus, per train, and per fly—"per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum"—and per Blackheath, I was deposited at my destination, when, having done all that was required of him, Mr. Smith left me. He did his strict duty: he was not congenial.

We boys were very happy at Paul's Cray: that I remember. Once upon a time indeed, being sentimentally inclined, I and another fellow in the autumn season (I quite forget who was my companion in crime) determined to imitate some adventurous heroes of whom we had read, and to, not exactly "run away"—that was too much exertion—but to stray away from school and live a vagabondish life for some days, and then return. The idea was indefinite: it struck us, I should say, about midday, when we were in one of the woods wandering alone, and when we thought we could support ourselves on a diet of nuts. But the season was not sufficiently far advanced; the nuts were green and disappointing; and after half an hour of woodland life, we, beginning to feel the

usual healthy midday void, decided on returning as quickly as possible to the meal awaiting us at the rectory, where we arrived very hot, hungrier than ever, and quite unable to give any other reason for our unpunctuality beyond saying that we had lost our way. Had we lost our dinner "the punishment" would have "fitted the crime."

My great "chum," Hamilton Woodgate, shared a room with me—we two alone—and here at night, after the candles had been removed by a pretty light-haired buxom chambermaid (to whom all the twelve little boys made love at the same time, but who would listen to none of us, being engaged to the village carpenter), Hamilton used to tell me in a condensed form all the most popular of Scott's novels, which he had read until he knew them pretty well by heart, especially emphasising the plots that had been used for operatic or dramatic purposes, as, for example, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Guy Mannering*, and so forth. Excellent chap that he was, with a sweetly soft voice, a most wonderfully accurate memory, and a perfect talent for narration, unequalled by any one I ever heard of except Schezerade, who saved her head by telling the Sultan the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. Thanks to him I knew the main points, characters, and incidents of the Waverley Novels long before I settled down to read them! In return, I, having already been taken to the opera, was able to produce my own

versions (always comic), illustrative of *Norma*, *Don Giovanni*, *William Tell*, *Puritani*, and such operas as I had seen. The idea of "stories from operas" was, I think, started in my mind by *Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare* in the first instance, while the notion of burlesquely illustrating them was, I am almost sure, but cannot be quite positive, suggested to me by seeing the pictorial series that used to appear in the very early days of *The Man in the Moon*, started by Angus Reach and others as a rival to *Punch*.

This reminds me that *Punch* I saw every week; my father always forwarded it to me when I was at school at Paul's Cray, and continued the supply regularly on my subsequently proceeding to Eton. So that in my leisure, quite apart from school work and from musical studies, I was, as it were, brought up on Walter Scott, Dickens, Ainsworth's novels, and those of G. P. R. James must not be omitted, *Punch*, and Mr. Punch's shortlived but temporarily brilliant rival, *The Man in the Moon*.

CHAPTER V

ON THE ROAD TO ETON—DURNFORD—JUDY—
NOVELS—AINSWORTH—BULWER LYTTON—
ENGLISH OPERA—ADELPHI FARCE—WRIGHT
—PAUL BEDFORD—MY EXTRAVAGANZA
—TOM MATTHEWS THE CLOWN—ENGLISH
OPERA—HARRISON—MISS RAINFORTH—MISS
ROMER—CHARLES MATHEWS—WIDDICOMB—
MADAME VESTRIS—STORY OF JONES THE
PAINTER

AND now we come to the first landing-stage of importance, when I am taken down by my father to be introduced to the Rev. Francis Durnford, then one of the upper school masters at Eton, a kindly, nervous man, with an irritable manner and so squeaky a voice that by universal Etonian consent he was nicknamed "Judy."

Odd that "Judy" should have had the task of superintending the education of one who was afterwards to be admitted as one of the family gathered about the celebrated round table of "Mr. Punch."

The recollection of that introduction is still fresh in my memory. I remember my father taking me down by the Great Western line to Slough, our being

driven in a fly along the Slough Road, and thinking how very dreary it all seemed, and then suddenly Eton, as it were, breaking out upon us all at once. I am convinced my father was as much impressed as I was with the scene ; but he regarded it relatively as mainly concerning me. He took it all in, as it were, and gave it me in bits. " Here," he said in a large way, " is where you will play " ; he was quite wrong as to the particular spot, and he of course had no notion as to the locality of the playing fields. " Here you will make a lot of friends who will be most useful to you in life." And here he was wrong again, absolutely.

We descended at Mr. Durnford's, which was at that time the first of the taller houses on the right after leaving the Slough Road, and nearly facing the archway leading into the school yard, and I was introduced to " my tutor."

It was just before the end of the holidays—the summer holidays—and the boys had not yet returned ; so this was only a preliminary canter. " Judy " Durnford stood on one side of the fireplace in his study, with an elbow on the mantelpiece as he tousled his hair with his right hand, furtively regarding his knee, which was at an acute angle with the low fender, and fidgeting generally, while my father stood meekly and almost reverently opposite, explaining *me* as far as he understood anything about me, and hoping that all sorts of good might result from my

becoming an Etonian under the auspices of the Rev. Francis Durnford, M.A.

My father did not stay to be shown over any part of the college that might have been open at the time, even if the offer were made, but we were shown over my tutor's house by himself and Mrs. Durnford, from whom, I suppose, my father obtained all information as to what I was expected to bring with me as necessaries of school-life. Personally I remember being deeply interested on my room, being shown to me, the little room that I was to have all to myself! I had had one all to myself at home, it is true, but it was only a bedroom; while this apartment was not only a bedroom, with folding-up bedstead, wash-stand capable of being easily and neatly concealed from public view, bureau with the lower portion given up to drawers for clothes, the middle to a most useful writing-desk, and the upper portion with doors to it and bookshelves complete, but it was also my sitting-room, my study, my breakfast-room, my play-room, my reading-room, my reception-room, and intended generally for any and every other purpose to which it could be legitimately put. Like the cobbler's stall which "served him for bedroom and kitchen and all" (I expect a pun was meant as regards this last word, which, pronounced the same as "awl," is so intimately connected with the cobbler's trade), it was also to be my kitchen! With what delight I looked forward to the making of tea

and toast, the boiling of eggs, and the general enjoyment of breakfast and tea at my own fireside; probably with a friend or two to look in occasionally from the other rooms, just as I, on invitation, would be delighted to return their neighbourly civilities.

So it was with a light heart and with an exhilarating anticipation of independence that, returning with my father to London, I looked forward to the expiration of my holiday, which was to advance me a step higher in life and confer upon me "the freedom of Eton College."

And I had an acquaintance who proved himself a "friend at court," in the person of Salisbury Ewart, one of the very best of boys (he was nearly five years my senior, and on the eve of quitting Eton, and no longer a mere boy, but a youth of eighteen), who being on most intimate terms with my cousins, at whose house in Sussex Square I used to spend the greater part of my time, nobly placed his services at my father's disposal, and promised to look after me at Eton, as he would be in the same house. This he did, and saved me a lot of fagging one way and another at the first start. For some little time after his departure Salisbury, coaching for the army, and myself were, during the holidays, for various home reasons, the closest possible chums, allowing for the disparity of age. He entered the army, served in the Crimea, and for the better part

of a lifetime I entirely lost sight of him, when, about twenty-six years after I had left Eton, as I was passing through the Burlington Arcade a greyish-bearded, youthful-eyed soldier-like gentleman stared, stopped, and then exclaimed, "Why, it's Frank Burnand, isn't it?" "Salisbury Ewart?" was my answer and question all in one. And there and then our old boyhood's friendship was, I won't say renewed, but resuscitated in a second spring, and remained fresh as ever until the very last day of his life, which even at the time of our foregathering was not so very far off. This is a vast jump from fourteen years of age to forty; but when we met again, as far as the freshness of our feelings was concerned, we might have only been separated by a journey of a few weeks instead of by an interval of over a quarter of a century! *Magna est amicitia vera et praevalebit.*

The mention of Salisbury Ewart brings back to me recollections of my uncle, George Burnand, at whose house he was ever a welcome guest. In the dining-room hung two life-size portraits, three-quarter length, one of Napoleon, and the other of the Duke of Wellington, both painted by Count D'Orsay. Of this latter picture I have often heard my uncle repeat the great Duke's opinion that "this was the only time he had been represented as a gentleman." The printed reproductions of it are, or at least were, well known. The Duke is in evening dress;

he wears a jewelled order round his neck and carries the blue riband of the Garter across his white waistcoat. I rather fancy these pictures came into George Burnand's possession as part repayment for money advanced to the gallant, extravagant, and generally impecunious Count. Where these portraits are now I do not know. Once I remember my father pointing out to me Count D'Orsay riding in Rotten Row, but except that he cut a very dashing figure in shining white trousers with white straps, and was generally a very glossy sort of person, I have no distinct recollection of him. All I remember of him was the brilliancy of his costume and my intense surprise that such a splendid personage could possibly be the painter of the two portraits in my uncle's dining-room. Not so very long after this I read *Henrietta Temple*, by Benjamin Disraeli, and was told that the Count Mirabeau (if I remember rightly) was intended for Count D'Orsay, and this invested the novel with an entirely new kind of interest, as Ainsworth, James, Bulwer Lytton, and other of my favourite serious authors dealt with more or less fictitious characters, or surrounded historical heroes or criminals with a halo of romance; but here I could read about a distinguished person actually living, and probably all the other characters, so it occurred to me, were as real as this shining hero.

I knew a good deal more of these novels, romances, and also of Sir Walter Scott's, and had

a far more extensive acquaintance with plays of all sorts than I had of the works of the Latin or Greek writers, or of mathematics. As to the last-mentioned branch of study, at that time mathematics were not in much demand, and when I went to Eton Euclid was ranked among the luxuries of education, and was charged for as "an extra."

From a very tender age I was an early play-goer¹—not meaning thereby that I was always taken so punctually up to time that I was invariably seated and awaiting the rising of the curtain at 6.45 to the moment, but that at a very early

¹ A bill of the play, May 29, 1835, exactly eighteen months to a day before my "first appearance" on the stage of "All the World" in the melodrama of "Life," gives the programme of a performance at the "New Theatre Royal Lyceum and English Opera House" for the benefit of "an Asylum for aged Freemasons," consisting of *The Female Sleep-Walker*, being a new version of Bellini's *La Sonnambula*, in which Mr. J. Bland, afterwards inimitable as a king in extravaganza, took the part of Allesio, with Miss R. Romer for the heroine Amina, Miss Novello playing Theresa, and Miss P. Horton (with whom, as Mrs. German Reed, I was on most friendly terms for many years, up till the time of her death) taking the part of "Lisa, a young widow, hostess of 'The Vine.'"

The opera was on this occasion followed by "an address written by Brother Douglas Jerrold," and spoken by "Brother John Wilson." Then came a "Musical Pasticcio," in which, of course, Miss P. Horton, an accomplished vocalist, took a prominent part, after which came a musical farce, *Cousin Joseph* (author's name not mentioned), in which Mr. Keeley, Mr. O. Smith (who was for years in my time the one and only villain, and a model for all melodramatic villains, of Adelphi melodrama), Mr. Tilbury as Old Nuggins (he never seems to have played youthful parts, certainly never "when I saw him," as Horatio says of the Ghost), and Miss P. Horton as Kitty Careless, entrusted,

age I was treated to the theatre, Drury Lane to wit, pantomime season to begin with, and, soon after that, when I had arrived at years of such discretion as can be reckoned upon between eight and thirteen, I was introduced to the Lyceum, the Adelphi, the Haymarket, and the two opera houses, that is, Her Majesty's, the old opera house, and Covent Garden, the new one. And having thus made acquaintance with the stage, and being possessed of a fairish memory, a lively imagination, and an imitative faculty, I reproduced in various red-covered account-books, purchased at a penny apiece, my own private and peculiar versions of some plays that I had seen, notably those with Wright, the Adelphi low comedian, in them. Of this handiwork of mine I possessed till quite recently a specimen in my collection of ancient odds and ends in the shape of a drama in very brief acts presenting my impressions of a piece called *Webster's Royal Red Book*, wherein Wright had been uncommonly funny, especially when disguised as the foreign leader of a small orchestra. In another red-covered penny one may imagine, with the "burden of the songs." The entertainment concluded with a new Scottish operetta, founded on a tale by Sir Walter Scott, entitled *Cramond Brig*, in which Miss P. Horton did *not* appear, and the audience was sung out and played out by Miss Somerville, Mrs. Griffith, and Miss Gilbert, assisted by Messrs. Wilson, Williams, and Maitland. At this period, as appears from the announcements in the bill, Mr. and Mrs. Keeley and Mr. Wrench were, for farce and drama, with Miss P. Horton and Mdles. Novello and Romer for opera, *the* attractions.

account-book I have my version, written when I was about eleven I suppose, of *Rumpelstiltskin*, the plot of which I had taken from one of the books that had been since I first could read at all one of my greatest favourites, namely, *Fairy Tales by the Brothers Grimm*, inimitably illustrated by George Cruickshank. Perhaps this *Rumpelstiltskin* of mine may have been written later during my first year at Eton, and was, it is highly probable, intended for performance at Mr. Woodgate's house at Penshurst, where I frequently spent a portion of my holidays at midsummer and Christmas ever since my dear boy-friend Hamilton Woodgate and I were together under the care of the Rev. Edmund Roberts at Paul's Cray, Kent. Most of the stories that I read for myself, and that were not imparted to me, as Hamilton used to narrate to me Scott's novels, *viva voce*, I used to turn into dramatic form, and one of them I am pretty sure was produced at Swaylands, Penshurst, before a very indulgent audience. By the way, some eighteen years afterwards, I was once more indebted to *Rumpelstiltskin* for an extravaganza which had a capital run at the Royalty Theatre, and occupied all the Christmas season, filling the house also for a good six weeks at the Prince's Theatre, Liverpool.

Of the first pantomime I ever saw I have a most distinct and vivid recollection.¹ Without re-

¹ My first pantomime. Here is the Drury Lane bill for December 26, 1842 (so I was just six years old), when the pantomime was

ferring to any play-bill, I trust to my memory, and I remember perfectly that its title was *Harlequin William Tell*, and that in it Tom Matthews was the clown, after the "Joey Grimaldi" model. Since writing these lines I have been able to refer to the play-bill itself, and I find that the Boxing Night programme for 1842 (at which date I had, in the previous month, completed my sixth year) consisted of, first, *Jane Shore*, played by Phelps as Duke of Gloucester, Macready as Hastings, and Helen Faucit as Jane Shore, of which I do not remember anything at all (I suppose we children were only brought in time for the pantomime), and afterwards the pantomime of *Harlequin and William Tell*, in which Tom Matthews was clown.

At what part of the *Jane Shore* tragedy our party entered their seats I do not know, but I perfectly remember being considerably frightened by the awful noises, hootings, yellings, and shouting with which the last act, the only one we children arrived in time

"*Harlequin and William Tell; or, The Genius of the Ribstone Pippin.* Harlequin, Mr. C. J. Smith; Columbine, Miss Fairbrother; Pantaloon, Mr. Howell; and Clown, Tom Matthews." The performance commenced (no time stated, oddly enough) with the tragedy of *Jane Shore*, in which Macready, Phelps, Anderson, Ryder, Mrs. Warner, and Helen Faucit appeared. On the second night of the pantomime, the first piece was *Love for Love*, in which James Anderson, Keeley, Selby, Compton, Mrs. Stirling, Mrs. Nesbitt, and Mrs. Keeley appeared! What a wonderful cast! Impossible to obtain so powerful a combination nowadays (1903).

to see, was received, and to this day I can recall how an undefinable feeling of relief pervaded the entire audience when the descent of the green baize curtain announced the end of the tragedy. Then began in the dress circle a fevered peeling and rapid suction of refreshing oranges; little boys and girls, in unwonted evening dress, removed their white cotton gloves, mittens, or diminutive "kids," and made their fingers sticky with sweetmeats. And though like "the little boy upon the shore" in the nursery rhyme "we sucked and sucked and sucked again," yet had we always one eye fixed on the green curtain, lest in a moment of inattention on our part it should go up suddenly and deprive us of seeing the very first and therefore the vitally important part of the pantomime. Stout women with big baskets were struggling between the seats in pit and gallery, hawking their "ginger beer, lemonade, and bill o' the play"; and how these burly vendors ever got in, got on, and got out of that pit, crammed to suffocation as it was on Boxing Night, remains and will ever remain to me an unsolvable mystery.

But a sharp tap on his desk, given by the conductor of the orchestra, calls everyone to order. In a second there is a hush! a silence! And then—Oh glorious moment in the Christmas life of a town-bred child—the overture to the pantomime commences! What overture can ever equal a first-rate

overture to a pantomime on the first night of performance!! What drawings-in of breath! all of a quiver! fine parts for the deep bass of the brass, splendid chances for bassoon, cymbals, and drums of all sorts and sizes. Crash! Bang! the green curtain has long ago disappeared, showing the gay "act-drop" behind it; and now after the final fortissimo, followed by the deafening applause, the facing round of the conductor in order to "bow his acknowledgments" to the audience, and it may be to finish up with "God Save the Queen," and *then* a great silence, the orchestra plays mysterious music, and—oh joy!—yet dread, and terror!—the curtain rises on some gloomy cave of fearful demons, whose nearer acquaintance not a boy among us under eight years of age would be eager to cultivate. Afterwards came the good fairies, the sprites, and before ten o'clock we were roaring with laughter at "Joey" the clown, and were joining the audience in the uproarious demand for "Hot Codlins," which song sent us all into convulsions of laughter, especially when the clown imitated the little old woman, the heroine of the song, who, as was related, was deposited "on her latter—head?" asked the simple clown. "No, 'end,'" shouted the audience knowingly, but rudely. Whereupon the clown winked, and rejecting the suggestion, went at once into the highly intelligent chorus, which was, I fancy, "Rum ti tiddy iddy tiddy iddy," with which everyone was so

enraptured that nothing but its "treble encore" would satisfy them. The whacking, the banging, the horse-play, the tomfoolery of the "comic scenes" of those ancient pantomimes! Well, it certainly did delight the children: we gloried in the harlequin, loved the columbine to desperation, loved the clown, and were quite ready to bully and laugh at the poor old doting pantaloon. Doors were open at six, and performance commenced at seven or perhaps earlier at Christmas time, as they certainly got through a long drama or an opera (one of Balfe's perhaps, as I well remember *The Bondman* played and sung by Miss Romer, Mr. Harrison, and Mr. Weiss) preceding the pantomime, and everything was over, blue and red fire and all, by eleven, and we children went home to bed, so very happy, but oh, so very tired.

After this, my first pantomime, although I am under the impression that our children's party to the pantomime was an annual treat at least for some few years, I do not clearly recall anything about any one of them in 1843, 1844, 1845, during which period an English opera company seems to have had the theatre, with Miss Rainforth, Mr. Harrison, and Miss Romer in Balfe's *Daughter of St. Mark* on Boxing Night 1844, and in Wallace's *Maritana*, 1845. Then in 1846, I being then just ten years and one month old, remember seeing Harrison, the tenor, Weiss, the basso, and Miss Romer, soprano (how well I remember her in a riding-habit trimmed with

gold lace and a hat and feathers!) in *The Bondman* by Balfe, and how perfectly I can recall Harrison with his face painted a mulatto colour, his white stockings and big calves, padded they may have been, but I doubt if there was any necessity for this addition to his muscular development, and his earnest acting. How I remember the song (though whether the tenor's or the soprano's I cannot recall)—

"Child of the sun, Unhappy Slave,
Thy spirit shall not dare
To gaze on charms which nature gave,
So beautiful, so rare."

The soul that is denied the three "to" something, "to" something else, and "to" something else ending in "y" or "ie,"

"Whose only liberty can be
To worship and to die!"

which words (by the librettist Alfred Bunn) I have never heard since that day, nor indeed have I ever met with the opera or seen or heard anything of it anywhere in all these years. I am almost sure that the song was the tenor's, and that as the Bondman "the child of the sun" was addressing himself. Evidently it made a deep impression on me then, as to a certain limited extent did the pantomime *St. George and the Dragon*, when I fancy—but of this I am not quite certain—I saw the old Payne, father of a family of talented panto-



The best Sport in the world. Disfranchising men a good deal.

A KID IN A HIDE THAT HE CAN'T FIND OUT

minimists, who played St. George. However, whether Payne or someone else, I remember the representative of St. George being exceedingly funny, especially when having to take his departure from England, in order to fight the dragon in some distant land, he in full armour and carrying a stupendous carpet-bag embarked on board a steam-boat bound for an Oriental port. In the pantomime Tom Matthews played the clown, and is so announced in the bill; his name, although in the cast of 1845, is not mentioned as clown, and in 1844 the clown was Mr. T. Ridgway. I do not remember much of Tom Matthews after this, but with his disappearance, whenever it was, the popularity of "Hot Codlins" and "Tippety Witchet" gradually waned; and it was not long before the singing clown vanished from the Drury Lane pantomime.

Tom Matthews, the last Grimaldian clown, spelt his name with two "t"s, as did that excellent comedian Frank Matthews, to whom "Tom" was not in any way related. The name thus spelt differentiates it from that of Charles Mathews, the inimitable "light comedian," who, as particular in matter of correct spelling of names as every right thinking, self-respecting person should be, was considerably annoyed by the constant and persistent misspelling of his own name. In one of my first letters to him I remember addressing the envelope to "Charles J. Matthews, Esq.," when he was living

in Brompton Square; whereupon the envelope containing his reply was addressed to "F. C. Burnand, Esq.," with the explanation that, "as you have evidently a 't' or two to spare with which you have presented me, I beg to offer you, out of my present stock, a few liquids to moisten your name with in the shape of 'r's and 'n's." Need I say I never again spelt "Mathews" incorrectly.

Tom Matthews — with two "t"s — was, as far as my boyish recollection of him goes, a very droll clown; he waddled about bow-legged, did no acrobatic tricks, never danced, was always pilfering in the most innocent manner possible, knocked frequently at shop-doors, hiding himself twice, but immediately after the third knock lying down in front of the threshold so as to ensure the tripping up of the incautious and irate tradesman over his prostrate body, when he, the artful, comic, mischievous clown, would slip into the shop and reappear with all sorts of stolen goods, hams and turkeys, under his arms, and sausages hanging out of his pockets, just in time to come into sudden violent collision with the now furious tradesman, whom he would incontinently floor with one of his own hams, and, at the watchword, "Look out, Joey; here's a policeman coming!" given by his faithful but weak-kneed ally old pantaloon, he would rush off the stage and on again, followed by a mob, when in the middle of a regular "spill and pelt," while everybody appeared

to be assaulting everybody else, he would somehow or another manage to escape the hands of several constables, as the scene changed and light and airy music ushered in harlequin, masked, with pretty columbine to execute some graceful *pas de deux*. The "transformation scene" of those pantomime days couldn't hold a candle, much less an electric light, to the glories of the modern Drury Lane "Christmas Annual," in which the old original quartette of 'arlequin, columbine, clown, and pantaloons' have decreasingly small "part" and nothing like a "lot" to do. Unless there be a sudden and unexpected revival, a popular revolution in favour of bringing back King Harlequin and his queen to enjoy their own again, the old traditional pantomime business commenced by Rich and Grimaldi, carried on by Tom Matthews, the Paynes (Harry Payne was the last of the filching, friend-in-knee'd clowns), is dead as the proverbial door-nail when finally knocked on the head.

I must have seen Tom Matthews several times. I find him figuring as clown in 1853 in one of E. L. Blanchard's "annuals" (he was for years the only regular pantomime writer for Drury Lane), entitled *King Humming Top, or Harlequin and The Land of Toys*. Drury Lane was then under the management of E. T. Smith, who had been originally a policeman, and became in course of time lessee of several theatres and of

Cremorne Gardens. I shall have more to say of him later on. But *à propos* of his first calling as a "peeler," it is recorded that on the occasion of a slight difference of opinion between E. T. Smith and Anderson, "the Wizard of the North," the former twitted him with having been a street acrobat, whereupon the Wizard, being unable to deny the soft impeachment, retaliated by reminding Smith of his having only been a peeler.

"True," retorted E. T. Smith, "and if I'd seen you at a corner of a street with your bit of carpet doing your fakements, I'd have taken you up to Bow Street, and probably you wouldn't ha' been here now."

From my list of pantomimists I must not omit Flexmore, the clown at the Princess's, a clever pantomimist, *maitre de ballet*, and accomplished dancer, whose date I suppose is about ten years later than when Matthews "flourished." There was another clown popular with everyone, namely, Barry; but he belonged to the circus, and was famed and quoted, as "the clown at Astley's." If I remember aright, he notably advertised himself and his benefit by harnessing a team of geese to a washing-tub, in which he, in clown's costume, sat flourishing a whip, and so was drawn in state from London Bridge to Westminster, where he disembarked and walked down to Astley's to take his part in the "Scenes in the Circus," then presided

over by a great broad-chested, heavy-moustached ringmaster, in short military mess jacket with gold braid and epaulettes, the inimitable Widdicomb! Never was, never will be, such a ringmaster! So superior, so condescending, so polite, so severe, yet so gracious! He suffered the fool Barry as a man of high intelligence might be supposed to tolerate an idiot who was for ever pestering him with conundrums, interfering with business, making rude and uncalled-for remarks to the riders, pretending extreme gallantry to the fair equestriennes, and, when there was manifestly nothing at all for him to do, inquiring with pretended anxiety of the dignified ringmaster whether there was "anything that he could go for to fetch for to carry for to bring?" A flick of the long circus whip was the only stinging answer that could possibly be given to such impertinence; and Widdicomb gave it smartly, as though he were flicking a fly off the sawdust. And didn't Barry cry "O!" and hop! and threaten to "tell his mother," and didn't Widdicomb thereupon tip him just another flick, which made him skip again, bringing him like a sporting dog to "heel," when he tamely followed the ringmaster as he walked round and round in the centre of the circle, ever and anon exciting the audience, the lookers-on, who saw most of the game, to unseemly laughter by his imitations of the master's manner, and by his absurd grimaces made behind the broad back of the unconscious

Widdicomb, whose whole attention appeared to be concentrated on "the trick act," or the all round-and-round performance of a spangled circus rider dancing on the broad, flat, padded saddle of a tightly reined-in steed cantering to the tune of the "Overture to *The Bronze Horse*."

And the military equestrian dramas at Astley's! Marvellous! And the fox-hunts! and the races! all occurring in dramas to which the present performances at the Leicester Square circus are but as child's play to anyone sufficiently ancient to remember the triumphs of Astleian drama. I have one regret as to these: I never saw the great Gomersal as the Napoleon of Astley's in the drama of *The Battle of Waterloo*, and I never saw the master of all circuses and of circus-dramas, the marvellous Ducrow, the hero of that celebrated stage-direction, "Cut the cackle and come to the 'osses," which inculcates a lesson on dramatic authors for all time.

Then, too, later on, before I went to Eton, and also while I was there *in statu pupillari*, there was given a far more gorgeous and a more refined style of Christmas entertainment at the Lyceum Theatre, under Madame Vestris, than had ever been attempted at Drury Lane, except perhaps before my time, when *Acis and Galatea* was played, and Stanfield painted the memorable scenery for it.

Madame Vestris had been, I believe, previously

at the Olympic: at all events, at this period, she with her husband Charles Mathews managed the Lyceum, and, with J. R. Planché as their author, brought out such marvellous Christmas extravaganzas as up to that date London playgoers had never seen.

It was here that I first saw Charles Mathews playing, as only he could play and as no one has played since,—yet am I no *laudator temporis acti*,—such parts as Sir Charles Coldstream in *Used Up*, the man with the umbrella in *An Appeal to the Public*, *The Practical Man*, and all sorts of characters in *Patter versus Clatter*, which was a kind of “entertainment” with himself for principal and all the others nonentities.

In *Patter versus Clatter* (it was all Patter, and poor Clatter was little more than a dummy, with certainly nothing in the part to justify his name) as *Captain Patter*, Charles Mathews sang three “patter” songs, one of which was “*Things that were not*.” The date of this was September 2, 1843. Perhaps I heard this when I was seven years old: at all events this ancient play-bill *donne à penser*, and comes to me as a warning not only to be as careful as possible in “verifying my dates,” but also conscientiously to avoid “trusting to my imagination for my facts.” I feel pretty sure that I never saw Charles Mathews until he played at the Lyceum under the Vestris management, but the bill from

which I take this record of *Patter versus Clatter* is of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, under the management of Mr. Benjamin Webster.

Certainly his "patter songs" in extravaganza were wonderful, so rapid the utterance yet so clear. No actor that I can remember has ever equalled him in his varied performances; only when, once or twice, he attempted a tragic or a pathetic touch, was he a failure. A little later I heard a good deal of Charles Mathews, as a Mr. Jones, an artist, of whom my father had ordered my portrait (as a chubby boy in turn-down collars and Eton tie,—so I must have been between twelve and fourteen—I have it now—in crayons it is), happened to have been for years employed by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Mathews (Madame Vestris, or "Madame" as Jones always spoke of her) to do sketches in water-colour, which were required to fill up certain spaces on the walls of their private residence. I am not aware of his ever having been employed at the Lyceum or Olympic in the scenic department: he may have served under that first of scenic artists William Beverley. Jones was a very clever scene-painter; and much later, when I was at Trinity College, Cambridge, remembering him, I procured from our club committee a commission for Mr. Jones to paint the first scenery that ever the "A.D.C." possessed. Jones was devoted to Charles Mathews and to "Madame." They constantly entertained on Sun-

days, and frequently invited Mr. Jones, who was introduced by them to the best of company, Count D'Orsay included; but somehow or other poor Jones, who had a wife and family dependent upon him, never could get from this brilliant and happy pair a settlement in full for his accounts "for work done," which soon began to "mount up," as he pathetically observed, "considerably."

"My dear Mr. Theophilus," the unfortunate yet privileged Jones used to say to my uncle when dining with him occasionally (for Jones had been employed to paint the scenery for certain theatricals at Stoke Newington, when a very select company played *The Queensberry Fête*, Charles Mathews's part in which fell to the lot of my Uncle Arthur), "I am going to ask you a great favour." My uncle divined what the bill would be, recognising the preamble.

"I've done a lot of work for Mister Mathews and Madame," continued the unfortunate Jones; "and they owe me a considerable sum of money."

"Why don't you ask for it?" inquired my uncle.

"Well," hesitated Jones, "I've been going to do so every day for the last fortnight; but somehow whenever I am about to start the subject, either somebody comes in,—you know Mr. Mathews is very busy at the theatre,—or Madame wants to speak to him on most important business,—they make no stranger of *me*," observed Jones parenthetically, with no little pride,—“and before I can

say another word, Mr. Mathews begs my pardon—he is always so polite; and Madame hopes I'll 'excuse him for just five minutes,' and away he and Madame go; and—ahem—I don't see them again. When I inquire, after waiting about an hour, they've left the theatre."

"No message for you?" inquires my uncle.

"Oh yes, at the stage door. 'Tell Mr. Jones, so very sorry; but if not back in an hour, will he look in at night—any time?'"

"And you go, of course," says my Uncle Theophilus.

"Of course I do," replies the diffident Jones; "I've got the run of the Lyceum, and I can go in and out as I like," he says, with an air. Then coming down to earth and business, Jones is compelled to acknowledge that when he meets Mr. Mathews and Madame again, perhaps the same evening, it is only for a few minutes, and, oddly enough, just before they are leaving. "'Madame can't possibly be kept waiting,' so Mathews says," continues Jones, "'we shall see you to-morrow, old fellow,' and shakes my hand most heartily as he jumps into the brougham, where Madame is seated. 'Good-night,' says Madame—she has a charming manner and the sweetest smile—'Good-night!' says Mr. Mathews, and immediately calling 'home' to the coachman, they are off before I've replaced my hat and finished my bow. They have perfect manners,

both of them; and one feels that with them one must always be on one's best behaviour."

"But don't you mention to them their debt to you?" asks my uncle astounded.

"My dear Mr. Theophilus," pleads the unhappy Jones in desperation; "how *can* I?"

"Then why go on working for them?" asks my uncle, naturally enough.

"Well, you see," explains Jones diffidently, "I have got some orders from them in hand, and if I refused to execute them, they'd employ some one else. They would no longer allow me to come into the theatre and go about it as I like; and if I brought an action—well—I should injure myself with other professional people."

"What are you going to do?" asked my uncle.

"Well, Mr. Theophilus," says Jones very seriously, and not without emotion, "you see *I* would not trouble about it,"—here he arranged his eye-glass, which hung by a broad black riband, and flicked a few grains of snuff from the frill of his shirt-front nervously,—“but there are Mrs. Jones and the young 'uns at home—and—and, sir—it's a matter of—of—real importance. So, Mr. Theophilus, if you could accommodate me with a small amount, say, five or ten pounds for a few days only? I have made up my mind. I have determined that I will ask Mr. Mathews straightforwardly and

boldly the very first time I see him, and I will repay you the money within the next fortnight."

The upshot of course was that my uncle, one of the most generous men that ever breathed, advanced him the money ; but delicately contrived to give him an order for a small painting or for some touching-up to an amateur's work, or in fact any commission that came into his head at the moment, so as to do away with the obligation which might have been an extra burden to the unfortunate worshipper of Mr. Mathews and Madame.

Within a few days Jones would turn up at my uncle's (whose kindness had prevented him from going to *his* "uncle's"), and, with a beaming face, exclaim, "My dear Mr. Theophilus! it's all right! I knew it would be! It was only because he was so pressed and bothered that Mr. Mathews could not attend to me! But *now*"—

"He has paid? Bravo!" exclaimed my uncle sympathetically.

"Well," returned Jones; "no—not exactly *paid*—but it's the same thing. I've to dine with him and Madame next Sunday, alone,—they give a first rate dinner,—'and then,' he said to me, 'we'll have a business chat.' So I'm going, of course; and he'll settle up."

"I hope so," quoth my uncle drily.

"Certain!" said the sanguine Jones, and departed in the very best of spirits.

After a few days my uncle wanted to see the artistic Jones about a little commission he could put in his way, and took the opportunity of asking him how he enjoyed the dinner.

"Oh, the dinner," exclaimed Jones enthusiastically, "was excellent, and the company tiptop."

"Company!" echoed my uncle; "I thought you were to have dined alone with Mathews and Madame to talk over business?"

"Ah, so did I," replied Jones, a trifle crestfallen; "but when I arrived, Mathews, who was in his dressing-gown—he always dines in his dressing-gown—quite *en famille*, as he says; hoped I wouldn't mind, but Count D'Orsay, Lord—I forget the title at this minute—and the Italian ambassador or *attaché*—a charming man—had been invited some days ago. He had forgotten all about it, and so had Madame; but he was sure I should find them excellent company! And so, my dear sir, what was I to do? I couldn't talk business in such society, and even if I had wished to ever so much, I shouldn't have had the chance, for it was a brilliant party, a delightful evening. Mathews was in such vein! Harley looked in afterwards, and a lot of 'em from the theatre and the opera. We had music, and singing, and imitations! You'd have enjoyed it immensely."

"But the business, eh?"

"Ah! I forgot all about it until the last moment," replied Jones, with a puzzled look, "when it suddenly

occurred to me that Mr. Mathews might be waiting till everyone had gone in order to hand me a cheque for the sum total, or for something on account."

"And did he?"

"Well"—hesitated Jones. "No—he—in fact, didn't. 'You see, after spending such a delightful evening, I couldn't, I couldn't possibly say as I was thanking him for all the pleasures, 'Now, Mr. Mathews, how about my account?'"

"It would have been difficult," my uncle admitted.

"Just what I felt!" resumed Jones, perking up again. "So when Madame bade me 'good-night' and went up to her room, and Mathews began to yawn as he extinguished the candles, I felt it would be most ungracious of me to keep him up any longer—it was past three—so I—I—thanked him heartily—and was lingering just a bit in the hall, when Mr. Mathews, who was himself seeing me to the door with his bedroom candlestick in his hand, said, 'Oh, by the way, Jones, we haven't talked over your little matter.' And I replied, 'Oh, never mind now, Mr. Mathews, it's rather late.' What *could* I say?—and he agreed with me at once, and said, 'Yes, it *is* very late; we ought all to be in bed by now. We'll talk about that matter another time. Shan't forget it. Good-night!' and he yawned again, nodded pleasantly, and I was on the doorstep outside and heard the chain going up inside; and, in another minute, all the lights

were out, except one in the bedroom. I hadn't a chance."

My uncle owned that the pecuniarily unfortunate, but socially fortunate, Jones, could not have acted in any other manner, and sincerely wished he might get his due.

Jones did get it, somehow or another; at all events some of it; but if he wasn't entirely recouped for his time and work, he could congratulate himself upon having had about the pleasantest time possible in the society of this brilliantly fascinating couple.

Of Charles Mathews, at a much later date, when I had the great pleasure of knowing him personally and working for him professionally, I shall have something more to say further on.

CHAPTER VI

LYCEUM AND MATHEWS — PRICES — KEELEYS —
WRIGHT — BEDFORD — BUCKSTONE — FARCE —
— MELODRAMA — ADELPHI — TILBURY'S POL-
ONIUS — DR. BIRCH — FAST YOUNG MAN OF
PERIOD — VAUXHALL GARDENS — CREMORNE
— CELEBRITIES — CONCERT — STAGE — OPERA —
JULLIEN — DICKENS — ALBERT SMITH — LEVER

THE Lyceum of those days I shall never forget, with its pit down to the orchestra, and Charles Mathews talking to the audience as if he were one of them, just explaining his character, whatever it might be, and the piece, as he went along. He was always so charmingly confidential: no wonder that Planché wrote for him the part of a chorus more than once, if I remember right, with invariably a "patter song," in the delivery of which he was, as I have already recorded, unsurpassed by anyone of his own time or after it.

At the Lyceum the celebrated farce *Box and Cox* was first produced, with Buckstone for *Box*, Harley for *Cox*, and Mrs. Macnamara as the Land lady, *Mrs. Bonner*. Mr. John Maddison Morton had cleverly concocted the farce out of two, if not three.

French vaudevilles, and his dialogue, partly translated and always founded upon that of the vaudeville *Frisette* (*comédie-vaudeville en un acte*), was a model for all good farcical dialogue from that time up to the present day. In fact, *Bax and Cox* is a model, not only of what a short farce should be, but is also an excellent example of skilful "adaptation" of a piece "thoroughly French" to the requirements, moral and histrionic, of the English stage. When I was a boy, English dramatists borrowed freely—"borroqw" was the polite term—from the French, and rarely, if ever, acknowledged their indebtedness to the authors on the other side of the Channel—until they were found out, when, after all, the French dramatist gained nothing by it; and, as dramatic work was at the best but "a poor game" for an author, even when original, the English adapter rarely got even fifty pounds for his work. "*On a changé tout cela, on presque tout*," and for some years past, writing this at the beginning of the twentieth century, English dramatists have, for the most part, trusted to their own wits, as otherwise they would have had to share profits with, and perhaps pay premiums to, French authors.

To revert for a moment to our old friend *Bax and Cox*, I find, from one of the play-bills of the Lyceum, dated February 12, 1848 (kindly lent me by Mr. Dillon Croker), that the entertainment consisted of first, *An Astonishing Phenomenon*, a farce, in which

Charles Mathews, Frank Matthews, Bellingham, Meadows, F. Cooke, Kerridge, and Miss Herbert played, followed by the Christmas extravaganza, *The Golden Branch*, written by Planché, in which Harley, Miss Kathleen Fitzwilliam (a delightful singer), and Madame Vestris appeared, the performance concluding with Morton's *Box and Car* (eighty-first time), played by Buckstone, Harley, and Mrs. Macnamara. So *Box and Car* has held the stage for over half a century, and, if well played, without "gagging," it is to-day as amusing as ever it was. Certainly this is a brilliant exception in the history of farce-writing.

I note here that this bill, above mentioned, confirms my recollection of the arrangement of the theatre. There were no stalls at this date in the Lyceum—none whatever. The dress circle was 5s. (to this part I was always taken at every theatre); the upper boxes, 4s. ; the pit, 2s. ; and the gallery, 1s. ; and, it is announced in large letters, "*No half-price to any part of the House.*"

The three low comedians who made me laugh more than any other actor I can remember on the stage at this period, were Keeley, Buckstone, and Wright. The stolidity of Keeley was something marvellous. I remember him—indeed, I shall never forget him—as Waddilove the fat boy, in *Parents and Guardians*, who is bullied by all his companions, and who is the butt and the scapegoat of the school. Shall I ever forget his abject misery, his stupid

astonishment, his victimised expression of injured innocence, when the eggs he had been forced to steal having been found in his pockets by the master and the accusing farmer, he bursts into tears, and rubbing his eyes with his fists exclaims, "Oh! who (*sob*) has been (*sob*) putting eggs (*sob*) in my pockets?" and therewith gives way to a paroxysm of blubbering! In this piece, too, how inimitable was Mrs. Keeley as the lark, frisky boy, the cock of the school, *Bob Nettles*; and what a perfect piece of pathetic acting was Alfred Wigan's as the old French schoolmaster. Then as the *Bad Djinn* in *Camaralzaman and Badoura* at the Haymarket, was not Robert Keeley something immense! And in this very piece, did not Mrs. Keeley, the *basse comédienne par excellence* of the English stage at that time (who has never been approached by any other since then, excepting Mrs. John Wood), dance as a Peri and a pet of the ballet? Rather! and never shall I forget it, nor any other of her performances that I, as a boy, had the privilege of seeing. Her *Betsy Baker*, in days when farces were gems in the evening bill, when there was half-price at all theatres, drew in the money at nine o'clock, and crammed the house.

Edward Wright, too, inseparably linked with the unwieldy and eccentric Paul Bedford in farce and drama at the Adelphi, was also in his own line inimitable. He, as also Buckstone, was so great a favourite with the house, that directly his voice was "heard

without"—that is, at the wings, just before entering—a titter commenced that went round the audience, at once on the broadening grin, with eyes wide open, all agog to welcome their favourite. Directly Wright appeared there was a burst of applause and uncontrollable laughter, simply at his appearance. He did not utter a sound; he looked astonished; he walked slowly down to the "fote," *i.e.* footlights, regarded the audience curiously, seemed rather annoyed, sniffed, and then, to the intense delight of everyone present, deliberately walked up the stage and made as if he were so hurt that really he could not stop any longer. A slight cessation in the applause caused him to return, and again standing at the "fote," he would open his mouth and make as though he were going to say something of intensely serious importance; whereupon again arose the shout of laughter, people rolling in their seats and holding their sides. Once more he would feign annoyance, and would turn his back on them to walk up the stage, at the same time hoisting up his coat-tails with both hands, not infrequently displaying an enormous patch where his trousers, like a paid bill, had been re-seated. Off went the house again hysterically, ladies blushing and putting their handkerchiefs to their eyes, and the men in ecstasies. At last, these fits having subsided, Wright, still apparently utterly unable to account for their extraordinary conduct, began his speech, whatever it might be, perfectly seriously. 1.

never saw him without being convulsed, his tip-tilted nose, the roguish glance of his eyes, the twitch of the mouth being absolutely irresistible. Would it be so now?

Buckstone was much the same; but it was Wright's regular "business," and, I expect, an Adelphi audience would have expressed its keen dissatisfaction had their favourite not treated them to his invariable "coming down to the front and regarding the audience." Charles Mathews did it occasionally, but it was during the piece, when he was in the middle of his part, and had, as it were, put himself "on speaking terms" with the house, when he could address them confidentially, and his spoken confidences were as irresistibly humorous as Wright's wink or Buckstone's eccentrically twisted smile.

Wright,—“Teddy Wright,”—as with feelings of awe I heard my favourite comedian familiarly spoken of by some who, as Eton boys used to phrase it, “knew him at home,” is inseparable in my recollection of him from the melodrama of *The Green Bushes*, or as it was called, on account of its exceptionally long run and its so constantly being revived, “*The Ever-Green Bushes*.” His quaint impersonation of “*Master Grinnidge*, proprietor of a travelling caravan,” waddling on with bow legs, a curly wig (of what period, heaven only knows) “all awry,” as it was worn, only powdered, according to

traditional make-up, by *King Artaxominous*, "yclept the Great," in *Bombastes Furioso*, a coat and knee-breeches several sizes too large for him, and holding a long clay pipe, at which he puffed deliberately, was a figure which, from his very first entrance, so impressed me as a boy that I have never forgotten it. Nor can I forget Paul Bedford as *Jack Gong*, the showman's assistant, who had very little to say beyond backing up his leader's inquiry of "Didn't we, Jack?" with the invariable answer, "I believe you, my b-oy-oy-oy!" which took its place amid the slang catch phrases of the time. But without Wright, Paul Bedford would never have become the celebrity that he undoubtedly was. "Wright and Bedford" were always together, so much so that at last there was a farce written for the pair of them, entitled *An Unwarrantable Intrusion*, which even to me, as a most favourably disposed critic of it, fourteen years of age, is memorable as among the most stupid pieces purporting to be funny I have ever seen on any stage, and not to be mentioned in the same breath with *Two in the Morning*, played by Keeley and Charles Mathews at the Lyceum. In the *Green Bushes*, when I saw it (*not* in 1845, when it was being played for the hundredth time), Miss Woolgar was the *Nelly O'Neil*, originally played by Mrs. Fitzwilliam, but Mrs. Yates, mother of the late Edmund Yates, and wife of the proprietor of the Adelphi (Benjamin Webster being

only advertised on the bill as "lessee"), was the gentle heroine *Geraldine*; and towering above them in distinction of character, and quite apart from them all, as a Frenchwoman, speaking English fluently but with the strongest possible foreign accent and the strangest occasional mispronunciation, was Madame Celeste, as *Miami*, "*the huntress of the Mississippi*." I remember well Mrs. Worrell as *Tigertail, a Squaw*, by reason of her being associated in the piece with Wright and Paul Bedford, who, as showman and assistant, had brought her to England, and were trying to teach her English. Whenever the showman failed in explaining a word to her he handed her over to *Jack Gong*, and *vice versa*. "What is civilisation?" asked the Squaw. "Civilisation," replies Jack Gong, puzzled, "is—well—is—. Here, guv'nor, you tell her what civilisation is." Whereupon Wright waddles across to the centre, the Squaw being on his left and "little Paul" on his right, and says, very much after the manner of Captain Cuttle's oracle, Jack Bunsby, giving a decision, "Well—you—see—civilisation—is—as you may say"—(and so forth, *ad lib.* for a minute or so), "is—civilisation. Isn't it, Jack?" Whereupon the audience would shout with laughter when the invariable reply came from the lips of Paul Bedford, "I believe you, my b-oy-oy-oy!"

The Adelphi bill, at the time of which I am speaking, is worth consideration. The doors were,

it is announced, "open at six," and the performance commenced at a "quarter to seven." They played first the melodrama of the *Green Bushes* in three acts and nine scenes, in which appeared all the principal performers engaged at the theatre. This was followed by *Taming a Tartar*, an extravaganza founded on the grand ballet spectacle, *Le Diable à Quatre*, written by Mr. Charles Selby, who was also one of the principal "character actors"—chiefly in French-English parts—of the theatre; and in this extravaganza, full of songs and dances, appeared all the performers who had been seen in the melodrama, with the addition of Miss Woolgar, one of the cleverest all-round actresses of her own or of any time, equally at her best in farce, tragedy, pathos, comedy, extravaganza, burlesque, and in singing and dancing. Then there was Mr. Selby, the author; Mr. Munyard, the second low comedian after Edward Wright; Miss Ellen Chaplin, a very clever young lady; and Madame Celeste, who must have already pretty well exhausted herself as *Miami*, the melodramatic Indian huntress, but who in the extravaganza had one of the principal parts, joined in most of the dances, and executed a *pas seul* entitled a *Pas de Fascination*! That was pretty well for the company altogether. Where is there, nowadays, an *ensemble* of such varied talent gathered together in one company? I have no doubt that it exists, and that, given a first-rate company, at any of our many leading theatres, its

members could be quite as at home in burlesque, extravaganza, or in farce, as they are in comedy or melodrama. Melodrama has, just for a time, "gone under," as a regular institution, sure to be found at at least one London theatre all the year round; and burlesque has been temporarily ousted by musical variety entertainments representing farce, ballet, burlesque, and low-comic opera all rolled into one. But to return to the Adelphi play-bill now before us. The powers of the Adelphi troupe were not exhausted by a melodrama and an extravaganza; not a bit of it, for by way of a *bonne bouche*, reserved for the last, not merely to play the people out, but because it was calculated to send the audience away in thorough good humour, was given (for the thirtieth time) the laughable new farce, entitled *Secing Wright* (name of author not mentioned, but I suspect it was Mr. Selby, who was kept on the premises as a stock author, to do odd jobs in dramatic literature as well as take small parts), in which Messrs. Paul Bedford and Wright played, and where the name of Mrs. Frank Matthews appears in the part of *Susan Griffiths* (*Hookey's servant*). Evidently Frank Matthews was engaged elsewhere, probably at the Lyceum with his namesake Charles; his clever wife remaining for a long time at the Adelphi, where I remember having seen her (about 1846 or 1847, I should say) playing in *Domestic Economy*, a capital farce by Mark Lemon, with

Wright as *Joe Grumley*, and queer old C. J. Smith as her brother, *Sergeant Brown*.

Here it occurs to me to wonder who was the tragedian whom when quite a boy I saw playing Hamlet at the Haymarket, when an amusing old-fashioned actor (he was always old-fashioned whatever he played, and I remember him in some farces) of the name of Tilbury played *Polonius*, whom Hamlet classes among "these tedious old fools!"

Whoever was the Hamlet, I have quite forgotten *him* (even if it were Macready), his appearance, and his performance; I remember not Ophelia; I remember a very grand lady as the Queen (Mrs. Warren it was, I fancy); but as a matter of fact, except the gravedigger, if it was played by Keeley on this occasion, and Osric (if it was "an early Alfred Wigan"). I remember only old Tilbury as Polonius, with his "Very like a whale!" which set the unsophisticated (they must have been very unsophisticated) audience laughing consumedly.

Being quite a little "Tom-all-alone," I was from the very earliest time a devoted student of novels, romances (those by G. P. R. James and Harrison Ainsworth having the preference), and of plays. And as I had rarely any playmates, except a family, the Cummings, residing in a country house on the borders of Clapham Common, whom I visited occasionally, and my cousins, the George Burnands (who, I fancy, while their mother was

alive, resided principally out of town, until after her death, when they came up to Bedford Square and thence migrated to the newest quarter of London, Sussex Square, Hyde Park, to which quarter we followed not long afterwards), my father began to make a companion of me during the holidays; and in his company and in that of a great friend of his, one Mr. "Jemmy" Rouse, I was frequently taken to the theatre. In winter time we generally supped afterwards, most convivially, at an oyster shop in the Strand, not far from the Lyceum pit door, on which occasions "Jemmy" Rouse was quite the life and soul of our party. "Our party," by the way, usually consisted of my Cousin Norman, who was my *æqualis*, and another cousin, Bransby, who was my senior by about two or three years, and who was then a day pupil at a school in Kensington kept by a master appropriately named Birch, and was looking forward to being launched in the City as a clerk to one of my uncles at Lloyds', where there were two of them well established. Our elder companion, Jemmy Rouse, was a round-faced, plentifully whiskered, very slangy young man of about I daresay twenty-five or more, engaged in nothing in particular in the City, a *raconteur* of the latest raciest stories, jovial-looking, with a rolling gait and devil-may-care way of expressing himself; he was addicted to beer, of which he could (and did) take any amount, to tobacco in the shape of cigars (not pipes, and in those days

the cigarette was absolutely unknown); he indulged in a loud laugh, loud conversation embellished with uncouth phrases and illuminated with quotations from the latest farces, given in imitation of the various popular actors in whose parts the aforesaid phrases occurred. Jemmy Rouse was typical of the fast man about town of that period, but he did not affect the dress of "the gent" (as drawn by Albert Smith) whose appearance he ridiculed, and whose head he was quite ready to punch at any time; for friend "Jemmy" was a scientific pugilist, could use his "mawleys," and was up in all the slang associated with the prize-ring. Often would I hear him recounting to my father—who was some twelve years his senior, and a grave and reverend senior, too, in comparison with his sprightly young friend Jemmy, whom now and then he took upon himself to reprove as going a bit beyond the limits of the proverbial *maxima debetur pueris*—how on the night before, he, in company with some others of the same kidney, had had a "jolly good row," and had "bowled over peelers" right and left, and had got out of the mess somehow—(Heaven knows how, and let us hope it wasn't true!),—and how he felt rather dilapidated that morning and couldn't take any breakfast, but if there was some "malt liquor" handy he would take some of *that* "in the native pewter." Whereupon the little servant Robert was sent round the corner

for the beer, my father in the meanwhile seizing the opportunity afforded by the interval for lecturing Jemmy in my presence; whereupon the said Jemmy would put on a penitent manner, and observe that though he was a bad boy and wouldn't do so again till next time, yet he had an industrious brother "which 'is name is 'Enery," whose example he intended to imitate; and so protesting he would make a grimace in imitation of "the lineaments of the late Mr. Grimaldi," which would cause my father to say half laughingly that he was "utterly incorrigible," when the tension was relieved by the arrival of the foaming pewter; whereupon the penitent Jemmy, after saying "Here's luck," would put his lips to it, winking at me as he did so, and did not set it down again until it was emptied, absolutely at a single draught. Then he would wipe his lips, draw a long breath as if mightily relieved, and, quoting Pickwick, would observe, "Werry good powers of suction, Sammy!" though at the time, as he never mentioned the authority for the quotation, I doubt if he had ever done more than "dip into" the original work; though, by the way, as he applied "dipping into" to his draining the pewter, his dipping into a book might have been an exhaustive process. Associated in my memory with the afore-said Jemmy will ever be that old-world place of evening entertainment, Vauxhall Gardens. My first visit to Vauxhall was made in company with my

cousins Bransby and Norman, with Jemmy Rouse, whose companionship was to my father well worth the extra expense. "J. R." knew everything that was going on and everybody of any note ; he called waiters by their Christian names, ordering refreshments with the air of an *habitué*, as no doubt he was. It was he who, on arriving at the entrance of the Gardens, bowed with burlesque effusiveness to the illuminated transparency exhibiting the figure of the proprietor, "Mr. Simpson," in the costume of a buck of George the Fourth's reign, taking off his cocked hat and saying (the legend was also on the transparency), "Welcome to the Royal Property." It was the same guide, philosopher, and friend who took us to visit "The Hermit," to see Neptune in a basin shone upon by a strong white light ; it was he who, taking our hands, much as Mr. Barlow is depicted as escorting little Sandford and Merton, led us boys through alleys lit up by a thousand coloured lamps to where there was a magnificent eastern city of enchantment built up in the distance, which under coloured fires became now green, now blue, now red. During these metamorphoses or "colourable pretences" the orchestra never ceased playing, and someone walked overhead on a tight-rope, until at last, when all possible combinations of fireworks (for that night only) had exhausted themselves, the eastern city became a bright white, staring, solid exhibition of masonry.

and then with one tremendous bang, the explosion of any number of rockets, an acrobat, styled *Joel il Diavolo*, flew down along a wire from a tower above to a *bosquet* beneath, in a shower of fire, and then, in a second, all was smoke, smell, and darkness, except for a few sparks here and there. How we had applauded the rockets! How we had held our breath at the flight of Il Diavolo! How grand, how splendid! *Magnifique!*—And now—*Sic transit gloria!*—And we went off to a light supper.

Long, long ago has Vauxhall vanished! its site built over. Its place knows it no more; nor could I, coming out of the Vauxhall Station, turn right or left and say, "Here once were the Vauxhall Gardens."

Cremorne was a later affair. Her ladyship's acquaintance I made during my last school time at Eton and early days at the university, or just before going up at all events. I had ceased to be taken about by my father, and no longer depended upon the guidance of Jemmy Rouse, whom after my first year at Eton I very seldom saw, and in fact do not remember ever to have met him again until I was beginning to make my way with dramatic work, when he stopped me in Bond Street, reminded me of old times, shook hands heartily, wished me every success, and then the kindly rowdy relic of a fast life that had utterly disappeared passed on—and very soon afterwards I heard of his passing

away. His brother Henry did excellent work as an engineer out in Egypt, but was attacked, I was informed, by malarial fever and succumbed.

In April 1848 I remember my father going out as "a special," as most City men did at that time, armed with a staff and wearing a badge. Of course our "fast friend" Jemmy Rouse was a "special," and equally of course he was looking forward to "a jolly good row," and to distinguishing himself by displaying his "science" on the noses and eyes of the Chartist rioters. I fancy my father was not quite so eager for the fray, and so confined his "beat" strictly to Bond Street, which, not being a leading thoroughfare like Regent Street or Piccadilly, nor offering the advantages of a large open space, as did Trafalgar Square, was not likely to be much troubled by any of the fiercer Chartists, if by any Chartists at all. My father kept his staff of office in his pocket, as he said, "for use when wanted," and the danger being over (it was only really serious in the neighbourhood of Westminster Bridge, where the military were all hidden away in barracks but "up in arms," quite ready, and only waiting to be called out; but the summons, I believe, was only once necessary, and then the Life Guards trotted out and cleared the streets), the "dangerous weapon" was labelled and dated and hung up out of harm's way in my father's bedroom *in memoriam rei*. I happened to be at home at the time (why, I don't know), as I remember the

staff, and my father frequently going out and returning. I remember the Sunday look of London, with the shutters up everywhere about us in Bond Street, and several of my father's friends, among them of course the valiant Jemmy, coming in from time to time with one or two others to take a little refreshment in the shape of what Mr. James Rouse, following Mr. Dick Swiveller, termed "a modest quencher." The modest quenchers were frequent. I learned more about "the Great Chartist Riot" from what I saw in *Punch* and in *The Man in the Moon* than I could possibly have gathered from any actual personal observation, as, of course, I wasn't allowed to go out for that day, and on the next it was "all over except the shouting," in which I fancy the convivial Jemmy largely participated.

In 1848 "Mons." Jullien was giving his promenade concerts at Drury Lane, and his "*grand annual bal masque*" is announced for December 18th of that year. Six months afterwards, on the 25th June 1849, Madame Vestris was still "a name to conjure with"; Jetty de Treffz, generally spoken of as Jetty Treffz, was singing a song called "*Trab! trab! trab! my pony trab,*" which took hold of the town and was popularised all over the streets; Mrs. Nesbitt and Mrs. Glover were still on the stage, as was James Wallack; and Charles Mathews, as a star of the first magnitude, with his name in a line all by itself at the end of a list of dramatic and operatic celebrities, is

announced to appear at Drury Lane, as an "unprecedented attraction, for one night only," on the occasion of Mr. Alfred Bunn's annual benefit, Monday, June 25, 1849. This was in the thirteenth year of my existence. Among the operatic stars assisting on this occasion were Signora Parodi, Signora Giuliani, Madame de Meric (her only appearance), Mademoiselle de Meric (who became de Meric-Lablache), Miss Lucombe, Miss Poole, the Misses Pyne. Susan Pyne was not yet a star by herself, and the tenor Harrison, who was subsequently to be associated with her in operatic management, does not appear in this list, though the names of Gardoni, Charles Braham, the great Lablache and his son Fred. Lablache are here, with those of Signor Bottesini, the celebrated violoncello player; Signor Schera, the operatic music-master and song composer; Mr. Benedict, afterwards Sir Julius Benedict; and Mr. Balfe, who was indebted to the poet Bunn for most of his *libretti*, which were chaffed unmercifully by various critics, but mainly by *Punch*. *Punch* was the hardest and most persistently personal of all, and got a deservedly sharp rap over the knuckles from "the poet Bunn," though it was supposed that young George A. Sala, assisted by Angus Reach and Albert Smith, was the leading spirit in the sharp and severe "word with *Punch*," which silenced once and for ever the attacks that had exceeded the limits of fair and humorous criticism. For Bunn's benefit the actors played

The Belle's Stratagem, and among the pieces selected for the singers in the *Réunion Musicale* that succeeded the comedy, Miss Lucombe sang *I dreamt that I dwell in Marble Halls* (music by Mr. Balfe—the words by Mr. Bunn); Herr Pischek sang *The Light of other Days* (also by Balfe and Bunn); and Mr. Harley, the comedian, sang "*Johnny Bond*, a celebrated comic song." Charles Mathews, with Madame Vestris, played in the "popular vaudeville of *Hold your Tongue*," with which the evening's entertainment appears to have commenced.

I perfectly remember being taken to hear Jullien's orchestra at Drury Lane when I was about eleven years old, and shall never forget the appearance of the "Great Mons.," as little, nay diminutive, Monsieur Jullien was styled, as, perched high up in a brilliantly gilt arm-chair, with spotless wristbands turned back over his coat sleeves, immaculate shirt front, overpowering white cravat, a very low cut white waistcoat, and, I rather think, white trousers strapped tightly over his tiny feet incased in shining patent leather boots (he certainly came to the opera stalls in this costume), he languidly surveyed the crowded house, and then like a dwarf refreshed with rose-water, of which he made a considerable use at all times, he rose, shook his black ambrosial curls, tapped the desk, brought everyone to attention, and then conducted with such physical energy, with such a waving of his arms, such a wagging of his head and

agitation of his "oiled locks," that while he himself almost capered to the inspiring tunes of the British Army Quadrilles, "played by five bands," and to the very marked time of the immediately popular "Drum Polka," he set every one a-dancing, or rather wishing to do so, and made his crowds of admiring patrons and followers long for the first opportunity of "footing it" to the perfect dance music of which Jullien, as composer and conductor, was a thorough master. Then he would sink exhausted into the golden chair, rise and bow, and sink down again after refreshing himself by applying a very white handkerchief dipped in rose-water, handy in a vase on a small stand at his side, when the sustained applause, developing into a thundering demand for an encore, compelled him to rise, bow generously, tap his desk smartly, call his band to attention, shake his ringlets, and give his "Drum Polka" once, or twice, again.

À propos of the popularity, among the fast set of men about town and "gents," of Jullien's *Bals Masqués*, there are plenty of references to them in *Punch* about this period, but this sort of thing was far more in the line of Albert Smith and the authors associated with him, as may be seen on reference to such novels as *The Pottleton Legacy*, *The Adventures of Mr. Ledbury*, the brochures of *The Gent* and *The Ballet Girl*, and also in the early numbers of the amusing *Man in the Moon*, brought out by Albert Smith after his quarrel with *Mr. Punch*

(wherein, by the way, *Mr. Punch* was absolutely in the right), assisted by Shirley Brooks, Angus B. Reach, and others. Fortunately a few volumes of this lively "monthly" are still in my possession. It was always attacking *Punch* in a waspish way, with the exception of one set of verses written, as I have since learnt, by Shirley Brooks, who not long after their publication was at the instance of Douglas Jerrold invited to join the staff of *Punch*. But of all this "at my time of life," between eleven and fifteen (and of that period I am now writing), I knew absolutely nothing, such names as Kenny Meadows, Angus Reach, Mayhew, Douglas Jerrold being names only to me and "nothing more," though on account of *Mr. Ledbury*, which delighted me immensely, Albert Smith was to me almost as much of "a household word" as was Charles Dickens, and immediately after these came Charles Lever and Bulwer Lytton. Yet within twelve years of this date I had met, become acquainted and associated with most of these who in music, drama, and literature were, as I have said, at this time to me only names.

CHAPTER VII

ETON—DURNFORDS—HARDSHIPS—EARLY SCHOOL—
—PRÆPOSTORS—LUBBOCKS—REFRESHMENTS
AT JOE'S—FAGGING—MISERIES—"SOCK-SHOES"
—GAMES—"WET BOBS"—"DRY BOBS"—SENSE
OF HONOUR—BOATING—MUSIC—DRAWING—
TARVER—EVANS—THE PROVOST—BETHEL—
PLUMTRE—COOKESLEY—HAWTREY—STRAW-
BERRY TIME—AT THE WALL—1851—CRYSTAL
PALACE—EVANS'S—IMITATIONS AT ETON—
CIDER CELLARS—MUSICAL FINISH

AND now, the time having actually arrived (I have mentioned it before) for my *début* as an Etonian, I must recall my *première* at "my tutor's," that is, the Rev. Francis Durnford's. I was duly taken there, I think, by my father, but of this I am not quite sure. I do not remember his paying a second visit to Eton; nor have I any recollection of his coming to see me and making himself acquainted with the college, its "forms" and ceremonies. I am pretty sure I went up alone, and chummed with some other "new boys," who were bound for the same tutor's, and others who were "not so bound," as the language of Catholic

Dear J. C. M.
I've archbisk by
all means. I fancy
I can see him.



Hiding with
Sauron

ecclesiastical authority hath it when granting the usual dispensation from the rigorous observance of the Lenten fast.

I am almost positive that I went to Eton in February 1850, immediately after the Christmas holidays, as my first impressions of a public school career, and certainly my most lasting ones, are of hopeless discomforts, of getting up by the glimmer of a “tolly,” *i.e.* a tallow candle, at six o'clock on dark, raw, cold winter's mornings, of dressing oneself most unsatisfactorily, and of turning out to cross the road and present oneself at one of the dingy schoolrooms opening on to the cloister in the college. Of course there were other “new fellows” as ignorant of Etonian localities, manners, and customs as myself, and we, *les misérables*, somehow or another, found out where we had to go and what we had to do. I say “somehow,” for I have utterly forgotten *how*. What a wretched lot we were! half asleep, cold, empty, and uncertain of what Fate had in store for us within the next half-hour of school time. I felt like one of Squeers' collection at Dotheboys Hall. Our only comfort was that the master seemed as miserable as we were; but, on consideration, there was not much consolation in this, as its effect upon him, whoever he was (I fancy it was Johnny Yonge), was only to make him testy and severe.

I have before me an account-book dated 1850, in a perfect state of preservation, and from the

interior evidence which it affords me I gather that I did not acquire methodical habits of diary keeping—of which this book is a proof—until I had been at Eton for a couple of school times,—we did not style them “terms,”—that is, for the Easter school time and the summer school time, and had returned to my tutor, the Rev. F. Durnford, at the expiration of the summer holidays—we did not style it “vacation”—in the second week of September. At that time, and it may be so now, the poor Fourth Form boy and Remove were (compulsorily) the first to return; the Fifth Form boys arrived a couple of days later, and the Sixth, I fancy, a day or so after them. My patron, dear old Salisbury Ewart, to whose care I had been confided by my father, was in the Fifth Form and, I fancy, his “minor,” which is Etonian for “younger brother,” came with him by kind tutorial permission, as, it being his first half there as it was mine, he ought to have accompanied me and not his brother. However, there we were, and I fancy Salisbury, who was always a kindly, plucky, good-humoured boy, as afterwards he was a first-rate soldier and most lovable man, did his best for me; and, after I had been there a fortnight or so, he made me his “fag” in the house, and licensed me to say “I was fagging for *him*” should any upper boy summon me to “fag” for him at “the ‘fives courts,” or “fag” me to do any odd job out of doors. This was about all he could do,

and for the rest I had to "bear the ills I knew not of" as patiently as possible; and this I am bound to say I did.

Oh those first days as an Etonian, at that time at least! *A-t-on changé tout cela?* Maybe. I certainly hope so, for of all the sad times in my life that ever I spent (always excepting my first night and day at my first school), those first few days at Eton were about the most melancholy. Nothing supported me under the inflictions except the remembrance that I was an Eton boy and ought to "behave as such," though I couldn't help remarking that the petty tyrants were also Eton boys, and were also "behaving as such," and would go on so behaving until the end of the chapter, or of the school time, or of their last school time, by which time I should be one of the "Dandy Fifth," and in, I hoped, a position to exercise my acquired rights of ordering, commanding, and of "whopping my own nigger," when said nigger showed any signs of insubordination, or merely for the pleasure of the thing, or as a reminder to the "fag" that even if the power of inflicting chastisement was temporarily in abeyance, yet it was still there.

Oh, but what misery the commencement of Eton life as a Lower Fourth boy! At least in *my* time. Up at six a.m., "lazily, lazily, drowsily, drowsily," as the once popular refrain of some 'burlesque song had it; hastily dressed, sparsely washed,

and out into the winter morning fog that generally hangs about low-lying Eton. How the place can be so healthy as it is, is a wonder!

Then the poor little chap (myself), with a vague idea of his lesson, probably to construe a Greek fable, with a "*ὁ μῦθος δηλοῖ*" moral at the end of it (they don't do this sort of thing now, I suppose), or whatever the task in hand might have been, would rush across to join the other little boys, all about his own size, and all shivering, who were gathered round an ancient door that was let into the wall of the cloister, suggesting the gloomy entrance into a gloomier prison. There we awaited the arrival of the master, who presently appeared in cap and gown, looking about as cold, uncomfortable, and as ill-tempered (especially about the nose) as the most grumbling and miserable among his unhappy class. Taking out his key, he unlocked the door, unless it had been previously unlocked by some attendant like old Finmore, Dr. Hawtrey's body-servant, whose whole appearance, as being dressed like a rather seedy cleric and having a rather scorbutic countenance, suggested that of an undertaker who had been enjoying himself on the previous night "not wisely but too well," and who had not had time to put himself to rights and "pull himself together," for, indeed, he was very much "apart" in the matter of short trousers and low shoes, as also were some of the masters, specially my tutor.

Then we all limped in, took our places on the forms, and were then one by one marked in by "the præpostor" (a hebdomadal office held by one of the boys, whose duty it was to note down on a slip of paper the absence of any one from the class, and to show up the delinquent's name to the master, and then, if I remember aright, after the master had signed it, to the headmaster), who, like one of the clever north country sheep-dogs, knew by sight each separate individual of the flock, no easy task at that dismally early hour, seeing that all were practically reduced to a dead level, especially in the dull morning, when, like "cats in the dark" all boys "are grey," and in a damp, foggy schoolroom lighted by guttering tallow candles in sconces (for I cannot remember any gas except in the street); and as we were dressed all alike, with our white turn-down collars, our black ties, waistcoats, and jackets, there was nothing to distinguish one lower boy from another except his trousers, and of these only the continuations worn by the first row were visible. Then some were "called up" to construe, and some could, and some couldn't, and the latter got "pœnas" and sat down, sadly looking forward to a miserable "after twelve," which should have been devoted to play, but which must now be given up to "writing out a hundred lines" of something or other and "showing it up" at, or before, next school time; and then as time went on fidgety fingers would quietly pull out watches and

furtively consult them, when just as Lubbock major, minor, or minimus (there were Lubbocks of all sorts and sizes about in my time), having been called upon by the master, had, in a very measured tone, with much fear and trembling for the result, commenced where the other boy, who had just sat down, had left off, the school-yard clock would strike the half-hour (oh blessed clock! oh joyous sound!), and, without paying any further attention to master or book, out we would all struggle, push, and scamper, running for dear life to the pastry-cooks, or "sock-shops," all open at that time, and there eagerly devour delicious hot coffee, hot buttered buns, and bread-and-butter, all in readiness for us! And never, never, *never* was there, or could there be, a meal so enjoyable, so excellent, so life-giving, so refreshing as this "coffee and hot-buttered bun" at "Joe's" and at "Webber's." "Joe's" was the nearest, and "Joe's" therefore most of us poor, chilly, half-awake starvelings patronised. And weren't we soon awake then? And couldn't we do a ham sandwich or two if the buns gave out? And wasn't Joe's niece or daughter, who assisted him, a pretty red-cheeked maiden, and didn't both of them, Joe and Miss Joe, attend to us in a wonderful manner, crowding his little bit of an unpretentious shop as we did morning after morning, spending our fourpences, and feeling most grateful for every spoonful and every morsel we swallowed in those early mornings! Blessings on ye both

wherever ye may be, Old Joe and Miss Joe, whose Christian name, alas! escapes me. Then we had to hurry off for another school time, a "saying lesson," at 7.30 I think it was; or did we get up at 6.30, in at school at 7, and out at 7.30, and then back to another school time at 8? I forget; but whatever the hours exactly were, they represented a wretched state of existence, until the good fairies, Joe and his niece (not to mention the elegant, dashing young ladies at Webber's just by Barnes Bridge, and knock-kneed, red-faced old Barnes himself, also with coffee and buns provided,—Barnes, "the friend in-knee'd" at this hour), came to our assistance and gave us to drink the *elixir vitæ* boiling hot, in fair-sized, not too large or quite large enough, coffee cups.

Then came the "saying lesson." I forget what it was: I don't wonder at this at all, as it isn't likely I should now, fifty odd years after, remember the saying lesson that I never could master *then*. I wonder if I ever knew a saying lesson? I doubt it. Not that my memory was ever poor; on the contrary. Give me a play as a boy and I would learn every part in it and say it off, scene by scene, without missing a word, and at the same time suiting the word to the action and the action to the word. But give me fifty lines of Homer, of *Poetæ Græci*, of Ovid (well, I found Ovid easier), of Horace, or of any other classic, whether "proser" or poet, and as I never could get

up the slightest interest in any one of them, and was ready at any moment (had I been called upon to do so) to denounce and abjure the classic authors and all their works, I would have answered as my sponsors did for me at my baptism, and have said most heartily and emphatically, "I renounce them all!" And yet, coming to know something about them in much later life, and having myself once for a very brief period taught a pupil both Greek and Latin, I found a way to interest him as well as myself in Homer and Virgil, and what of the classics I taught that pupil he has never forgotten, while what was taught to me, or attempted to be taught to me, as an Etonian, by my "early masters" (at six o'clock and suchlike hours), has utterly passed away from my memory.

Gradually, of course, I fell into the Etonian ways. I had to go through the ordeal of hat-smashing, of kicking, of pinching from scores of tormentors, who asked the new boy, "What's your name?" and then not only ridiculed it whatever it was, but added injury to insult by kicking, hitting, or otherwise maltreating the person and the property (his hat generally) of the boy who had civilly answered an impertinent question. Boys with titles were treated in just the same way, which is a consoling reflection now, though it didn't matter a rap then; for what possible comfort could it be to a mere commoner to know that if he were kicked and whacked and

had his top-hat skied half over the school-yard and made a football of to finish with—what consolation is there, I ask, for the miserable owner of that hat to know that the little Duke of Dumfoozle's or my small Lord Tom Noddy's hat is being treated in precisely the same manner, and that his little dukeship or lordship has had one whack on the back for "Tom," one on the chest for "Nod," and a final kick that took him off his legs just to emphasise the last syllable "dy"? Would such treatment of somebody else, be he lord or commoner, relieve my sufferings? for suffer I did, and suffer we "new boys" all did for the first few days. And if any Etonian of my time says he didn't suffer, then "if he does"—well, I apply to him the second line of the Bacchic chorus of "He's a jolly good fellow."

But then, when the new boy returned to his tutor's, had he not his own little room all to himself, his own books, his own bureau, his own easy-chair (if he had bought one), his own lamp, paper, pens, and ink, and his provisions all to himself, with plenty to share with some other new boy as wretched (out-of-doors) as himself? Truly, the Etonian's room at his tutor's was his castle. Here the wicked would cease from troubling, here the weary would be at rest—or ought to be—but was he? Not exactly. Could he sit down with his companion to a quiet little breakfast of their own providing and cooking *à deux*, until their masters had had their breakfast?

Not a bit of it. There was no breakfast for the unfortunate Lower Fourth boy until he had prepared his master's tea or coffee, done his toast, buttered it, grilled his chicken, boiled his eggs, and fetched any luxuries that he might have been sent to purchase from Joe Grove's, or Webber's, or Barnes's. Perhaps he served at a large "mess" of elder boys, a mess of four maybe; perhaps they were rich boys, who went in heavily for every sort of breakfast variety; perhaps, too, they were boys with a taste for bullying and with the sort of sense of humour that sat so well on Mr. Squeers, so that when one of the shivering "fags" had allowed the toast to drop into the cinders his master would play a pretty game with him, consisting of making the little "fag," who was on the point of bursting into tears, spread out his fingers on the table while his master executed a sort of toasting-fork exercise, suggested, it may have been, by the Highland sword dance, performed by the master dabbing the toasting-fork quickly down between each of the outspread digits, but occasionally, missing the table and prodding the fingers. Did the boy cry out he was whacked or bashed, or "the toasting-fork exercise for five fingers" was continued. His great chance of escape was to be a silent martyr, and to bear it with a grin. The first time how bitterly I wept as I knelt before the fire like a Cinderella in jacket and trousers, blacking my hands, and alas! burning the toast. This tyranny did not

last long. I forget how the mess was dissolved, or how I became attached to another master. I think I fell to Salisbury Ewart's lot, or he got me transferred to his service, and then I was as happy as any slave who had escaped from Simon Legree, the cruel Yankee in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. And here I pause to say that when it became my turn in the course of events for me as a Fifth Form boy to "fag" I exercised my prerogative with the utmost mildness. My "fags" were uncommonly glad to "fag" for me, as I never had anything exceptionally good but what they had a share of it, and I never kept them waiting on me when they ought to have been getting their own breakfast. Mind, I am of opinion that well-regulated fagging has its advantages; but it must be a system, and it must be well regulated. How to arrive at this without undue interference of masters, who ought to have nothing to do with anything that the boys can manage among themselves, I confess I don't see. What they do nowadays at Eton, whether they have "fags" or not, I am unaware. I daresay everything goes on much the same as it did "in my time." If it is no worse, I am glad; if it is better, I am still more glad. Wholesome fagging is far better, physically and morally, than effeminate favouritism, which should be most severely dealt with and determinedly put down and stamped out by any master becoming cognisant of the fact.

In the winter, football at the wall, a game peculiar

to Eton, was the only game of football I cared about. "Fives" was a great delight to me; but to be "fagged" at fives, that is to be hailed by a Fifth Form boy and made to spend one's playhours "after twelve" in picking up a fives' ball, was one of the cruellest forms of Etonian tyranny. But the summer half was delicious. Directly one had "passed" the swimming test (this was, and is still I hope, a most useful and sensible regulation), and could have a boat of one's own, built for you or hired for the whole school time, or by the week, then one indeed began to experience what "liberty" at Eton really meant. One sacrificed a little of one's liberty by entering "the boats," but, on the other hand, there was a gay costume to be worn (if you were very small and smart you would be dressed as a little admiral in the upper boats and as a middy in the lower), and there was an extension of liberty granted on certain festive occasions by one's tutor. I believe that, generally speaking, it is the fashion for Etonians to look back to their "Eton days" as the "happiest period of their life," just as it used to be for a bridegroom at the old-fashioned wedding breakfast to declare with violently suppressed emotion, amid the sobs of the company and the weeping of the bride, that that particular moment was "the happiest of his life," a very transparent fiction, unless weeping and wailing be outward, visible, and audible signs of inward contentment. And so of Eton. To

be one's own master, with a room to oneself, and monarch within those four walls of all you may happen to survey, is glorious—as an idea. But as practically, if there were a call for “lower boy,” you had, at the peril of your skin and of your freedom, to answer the summons at any time, no matter what you might be doing, no matter if it was work for “pupil room,” or “mugging up” a (beastly) saying lesson, or writing home, or enjoying a book, and to go out and be “fagged” in any direction that your master or the fagger, being an Upper Fifth boy, might be pleased to send you, the *status* of being your own master was reduced to the very smallest proportions. Then, where was the liberty if, on crossing Barnes Bridge, you had to “shirk” (that is hide away from) every master you might see coming along the one narrow street of Eton? You were allowed to go on the river, but were not allowed to go down the street to get there. All that nonsense, I believe, has been done away with. Probably some other nonsense has been substituted. Within the precincts of Windsor Castle was a place of refuge where masters and boys could meet and enjoy the music on Sundays, when the band played on the terrace; but to be caught, by any master, in the act of going there, or when leaving, would mean a “*pœna*” at least, if not something worse. What trash! The system simply taught “dodging” and deception. In every school there are stories of masters playing the “spy.” Such

stories there were at Eton, and some masters were considered uncommonly "dodgy." As "all is fair in love and war," so all hiding and dodging was considered as perfectly fair, and indeed as part of "the game as played" at Eton between boys and masters. If the hiding and dodging were simply part of the game, why so logically was lying. An Eton boy, put "on his honour," would tell the plain unvarnished truth, but so, I firmly believe, would most boys belonging to any other school.

I remember the case of a very mischievous boy, let us call him Smuggins (for he is now an eminent legislator, a magistrate, and country squire), who stayed on at Eton until he was in sixth form, and quitted the school "without a stain on his character"—in fact a quite typical Etonian of the very noblest sort—who, in conjunction with another, whom we will call Juggins (and to whom Smuggins was as Robert Macaire to Jacques Strop), played a practical joke which was fraught with serious consequences to the offender, or offenders, if caught. But during the inquiry Smuggins and Juggins lay low and said nothing, and the investigation resulted in an outsider, one Huggins, we will say, being pointed out as the culprit. Huggins of course denied it, but was considered in peril; whereupon Juggins, conscience-struck, sought out Smuggins, stated the case, and ended by asking, "Don't you think we ought to give ourselves up?"

"Why?" asked Smuggins stolidly.

"Well," replied Juggins, "if they accuse Huggins wrongfully, wouldn't it be only fair?"

"Not a bit," answered the bold Smuggins; "of course if Huggins were *proved* to have done it, and were going to be punished for it, then we ought to step forward and own up. But they haven't proved it against him, have they?"

"No," Juggins admitted; "they haven't."

"Well, then," went on Smuggins conclusively, "wait till they do. But they can't."

"Can't!" echoed Juggins, astonished.

"Why, you idiot!" exclaimed Smuggins; "don't you see? how on earth can they prove that *he* did it, when *we* did it?"

This reasoning was so conclusive that it settled the matter. The guilt could not, of course, be brought home to Huggins, and though some boys suspected the truth, yet no one uttered his suspicions; so, as Juggins didn't turn King's evidence against his companion in crime, and as Smuggins kept his own counsel, nothing more was heard of the matter until it became the common property of everyone as "a good story." To my mind it is an example of the most elementary casuistry, but not by any means an illustration of Etonian uprightness, honesty, and love of truth, of which qualities, as proverbial, I have heard a great deal; but I cannot remember ever having met with such nobility of soul among the Eton boys of my own time as is

credited to them by Eton tradition. The moral teaching of all public schools is summed up in the formula, "Never tell a lie when the truth will do as well."

I have an abiding sentiment for the great school, or rather college, sacred to the memory of "Henry's holy shade"; but much indebted to it for anything in particular I most decidedly am not. For classics? Well, in the ordinary routine way, perhaps even less than I should have been indebted to the teaching at any other school. Owing to the absurd system pursued, I acquired the habit by constant practice of getting up a lesson in some classic author, Greek or Latin, in a remarkably short space of time, in a way that for the nonce satisfied "my tutor." The plan was for some boy possessed of a "crib" (a pretty literal "word for word" translation) to construe aloud, while half a dozen others followed him as best they could, while scribbling down the meanings of words in the margin of their books. Some of these books, "annotated," are still on my shelves, and bear testimony to the diligence with which I took down the English meanings of Latin or Greek words. Sometimes we dived into Greek Dilectus for "derivations," anticipating the master's likeliest questions. But it was all slovenly, and only a very few of the boys with whom I came in contact ever legitimately and thoroughly studied their lessons in a scholarlike manner. As we began, so we went

on. The story of one school time is the history of all. As to games, in winter, speaking for myself, I detested football in the field, but liked the game "at the wall." Directly I had mastered "fives," I was very fond of it, and have always been so. Cricket I never played in my life after leaving Roberts's school at Brighton; it amused me to look at it; as a public school game it interested me as a partisan. But what I did take to was boating. I did not hold with racing, but with a pleasant row, sometimes in a "funny" with another fellow, and no steerer; sometimes in my own "tub," a "lock-up," when I generally joined a few friends in the heat of summer "after twelve" or "after four," who were willing to share in "sherry-cobbler," iced and enjoyed through straws, or other "lush" (that was then the slang word for drinks), brought to us from "The Christopher" (the large old inn at Eton), and pipes of "shag" (shag, if you please, not "bird's eye") purchased at "Kitty Fraser's," which, as the only tobacconist's shop between the college and the river, enjoyed all the patronage that Eton boys could bestow. In such quiet nooks as were provided by "back water" and other similar deflections from the main stream, we smoked and read novels, studied *Bell's Life*, principally for the fights, and occasionally a boy who plumed himself on being uncommonly "fast" and quite "a man about town," would show us some very questionable kind of "literature," which,

I am glad to remember, was very soon honestly denounced by the majority as "beastly," and was torn up and chucked into the river. I suppose the habits and manners of the majority of boys, in any large school where they enjoy such liberty as we did at Eton, are much the same everywhere. The "saps" will always be "saps"; the "*pious Æneas*" will always be religious; the sneak will be the sneak, and so forth, and so forth. What personal influence any individual master at Eton in my time exercised over his pupils I never discovered. Certainly my first tutor, "Judy" Durnford, exercised none, as unless he came round the house and paid us a surprise domiciliary visit in our rooms, I rarely came across him out of the house, except when I saw him hurrying into school. Eton was, and I suppose still is, an expensive affair; the parents paying willingly for the benefit they hope will accrue to their sons from mixing with those whom they are pretty sure to meet in the course of their subsequent career, or with whom they hope they *will* meet, and who will be of some use to them in whatever may be the station of life to which they are called. A "fond delusion" of the parents, except as to those sons who enter diplomacy, get places in Government offices, obtain commissions in the Guards and in the army, are called to the Bar, take orders in the Church of England, or whose position by hereditary rank is at once fixed for them on their

first entrance into life. A "public" school is a misnomer when applied nowadays to Eton, as including oppidans and collegers, because as far as oppidans are concerned it means that the school is open only to the sons of those who can afford to pay two hundred and fifty pounds a year for the privilege of being an Etonian. The "college" is another matter; that is the original Eton, and though shorn of many of its ancient privileges, is still "the foundation" on which the oppidan superstructure is built.

True, that you'll find Etonians pretty well everywhere, because the numbers are larger at Eton than at Harrow, Winchester, or Rugby, or at least they used to be so; and so it happens that to have been an Etonian becomes a sort of freemasonry, and may, like being a member of the "free and accepted" brotherhood, be of some use in the journey through life.

I continued to learn the piano here, being instructed by an absurd-looking chorister named Mitchell, with a rather pear-shaped head, black oily hair, and carefully curled whiskers. He had dumpy fingers, a heavy hand, and however skilled he may have been as an organist, which, when not singing in choir, was, I believe, his line, he was as much fitted to teach the piano as he was to give lessons in tight-rope dancing. However, I studied on, and as Robert Sutton, a boy just in sixth form, had a piano in his room, and as subsequently another, I think Vernon

(Hon. William Venables Vernon, if I am not mistaken), also considerably my senior, had one in his, I was allowed now and then to listen to other older boys (who *could* play) perform, and was permitted to try my hand occasionally.

The piano was the only "extra" I learnt at Eton. Others had such "extras" as French at Tarver's; mathematics (which were not in the regular *curriculum*), as taught by Stephen Hawtrey, or "Stephanos," as the eccentric Rev. Gifford Cookesley, one of the Fifth Form masters, used to nickname him; and drawing, as taught by Mr. Evans, who had a house then, and, as he was not a tutor, was called "a dame." The boys who were supposed to benefit by this out-of-school instruction used to have tickets signed by their tutor on going out to "Evans's" or "Tarver's," and signed by Evans or Tarver on their leaving. This led to a fair amount of dodging, altering figures, and so forth; whether the boys ever went as far as to commit forgery I don't know, as personally I had nothing whatever to do with them, and only knew the facts from what the boys themselves let out; but I fancy that Etonian "honour among thieves" would not have stood in the way of falsifying a signature or altering a time.

When I first went to Eton, the governing body, namely, the provost and fellows, consisted of four clerical magnates, who were as comic a set to look at as ever were imagined by Gilray, Phiz, or Cruik-

shank. Hodgson—Rev. Francis Hodgson, I think, was his name in full—was provost, a heavy looking round ball of a man, who waddled along as if taking no interest in anything in particular, and whose part in the communion service, when it fell to his lot to share it with one of "the other fellows," was so indistinctly mumbled that he might as well have been under a feather bed. In fact, a more grotesque performance than the communion service at that time at Eton it has never again been my lot to meet with, and, need I say, that the "imitations" of its performance by the provost and fellows as given by the boys were not intended to represent sentiments of the "sincerest flattery." The provost puffed and blew as he waddled up the chapel. Little Plumtre, a "roving" one, with one eye (vice-provost, I think) that was always on the alert, looking out in a direction totally at variance with his other eye, his white hair sticking up on end like the crest of a cockatoo whose temper has quite recently been ruffled, walked from his stall to the east end of the chapel with a sprightly limp, and standing at the south end of the table while the provost was to the north of it, joined with his superior in a sort of duet, coming in with very high jerky notes and ending the sentence, whatever it was, quite inaudibly. "Bethel the Bursar," who had all the appearance of a good old high-tory, port-winy clergyman, roared like a bull of Bashan, as, by

the way, he was not infelicitously described by my second tutor, the Rev. Gifford Cookesley, whose opinion of the entire lot of his superiors and *confrères*, not a very high one, was freely expressed, in and out of season, to his pupils. Then there was Dr. Hawtrey himself, whose dainty lisping mannerism was easily imitated, and whose voice, when he had to take part in the service, was to that of Big Bethel the Bursar as might be the notes of a reed-pipe to those of a bassoon.

One thing I clearly remember, and that was that in chapel during the "summer half" many of the smaller boys appeared in white trousers, *i.e.* "ducks." These little chaps sat in the front seats (as, I believe, other little chaps do to this day, perhaps also occasionally in "white ducks"—but that depends on fashion) on either side of the gangway, and with no desk in front of them, so that whereas only the upper part of all the others could be seen, the entire form of these rather small "fourth formers" was visible. Behind them was a row of "fifth formers," and among them a waggish Theodore-Hookish sort of boy, who, of malice prepense, had come into chapel with a lusciously ripe strawberry or two provided for the special purpose of being placed on the bench in front, so that when some little chap in brighter white ducks than the others, and exhibiting signs of excessive dandyism in his general attire, should, while the second lesson was being read, have to sit down,

CHAPEL IN STRAWBERRY TIME 163

he would inevitably come "squash" upon the strawberry "yielding under pressure." Difficult was it for his seniors seated just behind him to refrain from a guffaw, when they, being accidentally confederates in the plot, saw the boy start up as suddenly as he had sat down, and re-seat himself with a puzzled expression, not daring to make any further movement lest general and too particular attention should be attracted to him. And when we all had to kneel, and the boys in the front rows had to turn round in order to do so, they alone of all in the chapel were exposed to remarks made at their expense and literally "behind their backs." Of course, the unfortunate boy, who, like Mr. Cox in the farce, had a "strawberry mark," only it wasn't "on his left arm," was the cause of much tittering, and if by chance the "blot on the scutcheon" was perceived by one of the authorities in the stalls above, the sanctity of the place (I mean, of course, the chapel) precluded immediate inquiry, and to proceed with it afterwards would have been a matter of considerable difficulty.

A propos of chapel, we kept "eves" of saints' days, with afternoon choral service instead of three o'clock school, and also saints' days which were whole holidays, with morning and afternoon choral service, which latter was fairly popular when, the anthem was a favourite one, like "The Shield, the Sword, and the Battle." Psalms with good swinging

tunes we liked the best, and the "go" of the psalm that has the recurring refrain of "For His mercy endureth for ever," was an effect that once heard would not be easily forgotten.

"What's the anthem to-day?" we would ask of one of the choristers, noted for his lack of aspirates.

"To-day? eh?" he would reply. "Why, it's 'Oly, 'Oly, 'Andel-'Allelooia-Chorus."

Of course, it was only when this anthem was on the list that we put the question.

So much has been written about Eton of that day, as, for example, of "Spankie le Marchant," one of the piemen at the wall; of "Bryan," with his hand-cart full of tarts, buns, etc., in the winter, and dispensing ices and little glasses containing jam and milk in the summer; and of the other "cads"—the football and boating cads, the cads with dogs, some of them, the cads, not the dogs, being such scoundrels as ought not to have been allowed to hold any communication with boys of any age; there was one "Polly," an utterly helpless gipsy-looking loafer, whose character certainly would not have borne investigation,—I say these characters have been so frequently described that to do more than mention them here is quite unnecessary.

"Spankie" was the best of the lot, a fat-faced, short neck'd, oily-mannered old humbug, whose salutation invariably was, "Well, my little (what-

ever the boy's name was), and *what* can I do, sir, for *you* this morning, sir?"

Once I remember as I was going into school seeing a very small boy wearing a very large hat purchasing a cake of Spankie. A big boy, in passing, gaily smashed this little fellow's hat right over his eyes, just as he was busily engaged in munching Spankie's cake, and went his way rejoicing. Spankie put the small boy's hat right for him, and the little bit of a fellow was evidently very grateful for the attention. He had dropped his cake into the mud. Spankie saw his opportunity, and without making any remark on the rude action of the bigger boy, who was now out of sight, he addressed himself to the sufferer thus—

"And now, your little Grace, what can I do for *you*, your little Grace?"

His little Grace laid out a penny or two and went off happily, with a perfectly "shocking bad hat."

"Who is that, Spankie?" I asked.

"That," answered Spankie, with a comfortable smile and in his oiliest manner, "that, my little Burnand, sir, is his little Grace the Duke of St. Albans, who came up at the beginning of this half—his little Grace the Duke of St. Albans, sir; yes, sir, and what can I do for you, my little Burnand, sir?"

"You know everybody, Spankie," I observed,

"Yes, my little Burnand, sir, I do, sir," he replied, smiling sweetly; "your father Francis Burnand of

Cornhill is in the City, sir, and your uncles too, sir, and—ah, my little Lubbock minimus, what for *you* this morning, my little minimus?"

It was a tradition with us that Spankie (surname "Le Marchant," how entitled to it I don't know) was a spy and informer in the pay of the masters. Certainly if you wanted correct information about anybody or anything in Eton, Spankie was *the* person to afford the information.

My first summer school time ended most satisfactorily (1850), and I attended my first "Eton and Harrow" cricket match in company with a "lot of nice new friends" from Eton, who were spending three or four days in town. The cricket matches, Eton *v.* Harrow and Eton *v.* Winchester, occupied quite that time, that is as far as days went; but in the evenings after the stumps were drawn, there were other games on that offered attractions more powerful than the public school matches. So while their parents and guardians in the country were anxiously awaiting the arrival of the dear boys, the dear boys themselves were "doing London," and, as the phrase nowadays has it, "painting the town red," that is as red as precocious boys of from fourteen to over sixteen could paint it. Boys of seventeen and eighteen were past-masters at this sort of thing, and at nineteen they were on their way to the university. I must not forget that not a few of us living in town had already enjoyed a taste

of the Tom-and-Jerryiness of London life during the time of the annual University Boat Race at Easter. Of course through my friend Jemmy Rouse, my elder Cousin Bransby, and through my father's kindly taking me about to almost all the sights, shows, and places of *al fresco* entertainment, and through my acquaintance with the Albert Smithian up-to-date and "about-town" literature of that period, I personally knew rather more of the "fastnesses" of London than did most boys of my age. We will, however, not dwell upon this first holiday time (which was a kind of preface to subsequent holidays), and skipping over 1850, during which time I was making acquaintance with all sorts of light literature (as I gather from the titles of the books and magazines that occur in copies of bills paid to my bookseller, Dolman of Bond Street, long ago disappeared), and passing over memoranda of certain extravaganzas I had written and submitted to the sister of my schoolboy friend Hamilton Woodgate, his senior and mine, who had thrown herself heart and soul into our theatricals at Swaylands, Penshurst, I come to the Exhibition year of 1851, when my father, having given up his rooms in New Bond Street, had permanently settled in Sussex Place, Hyde Park.

When I was fifteen, that is in 1851, the Crystal Palace, as all the world knows, was opened in Hyde Park by the Queen and Prince Albert, the youthful

royal family assisting. Well do I remember the gradual growth of what was intended to be the Palace of Concord, the harbinger of universal peace and goodwill. As a matter of fact it marked the close of many peaceful years, and when the drop-scene which had descended upon this brilliant act was again raised, it was to the strains of martial music trumpeting forth the commencement of the Crimean War. Our weapons had rusted, our tactics were ancient, our commissariat system was hopelessly out of gear. But our British pluck carried us through; and, as at fifteen I was no student of the daily papers, all that could be learnt of the progress of the war, of the sufferings of our troops, and of the strong popular indignation felt and expressed throughout the length and breadth of the land, I as a boy gathered solely and only from *Punch*, with which my father, keeping up the excellent custom he had commenced when I was at school at Paul's Cray, supplied me regularly week by week. I remember, to hark back to the Palace of Crystal, how annoyed I was by the process of its construction, which I concluded would for a long time exclude me from Rotten Row, where I, on a hired pony, was accustomed to disport myself, accompanying my father in his afternoon's ride. At that time the Row was simply a straight line of ride extending from opposite Apsley House to the last gate of the Park, Kensington S.W. side, without any inter-

vening gates. In the summer months a military band used to play in Kensington Gardens just on the border of the *fosse* outside of which Rotten Row was continued, and here the equestrians used to draw up their horses and listen to the performance of all the most popular airs of the day, chiefly operatic 'as far as I remember. In fact the gathering mainly represented the occupants of the opera stalls on horseback. I fancy the process of building the Palace caused very little inconvenience to the frequenters of the Row; but as I was at Eton for the greater part of the year, I only took such a passing interest in the proceedings as the holidays permitted, and I have no recollection of being present at the opening of the Exhibition in May 1851, though the Palace of Glass itself I can easily recall, seeing that it has been perpetuated at Sydenham, and is still with us as a memorial of the mother of all universal exhibitions, and as a tribute to the genius of Paxton.

Being, at the age of fifteen, as I have before had occasion to mention, a precocious patron of Evans's, the Cider Cellars, the Coal Hole, for several nights during the holidays, especially the midsummer holidays, I remember distinctly the opening verse of a song, to the tune of "The King of the Cannibal Islands," about the

"Glorious roarious first of May,
When our good Queen Vic-to-ri-a
Opened the Palace of Crystal!"

sung by one Sharpe, who at Evans's had a considerable vogue. He did not sing *his* songs until the midnight hour had struck, when all the white-faced little choristers who, with the big choristers, had been delighting everyone with excellently sung old-fashioned glees and compositions of the very first quality, were marched off to bed. This was an excellent rule, to which the boys in the audience ought not to have been an exception. When these serious singers had withdrawn, and only the tenor, Mr. Stuart, was left with, I think, a baritone singer, and a Mr. Brady in "the chair," then came on the stage the "comic singer," with his "tooral looral" *refrain* and other equally idiotic words which were then in fashion in all light-hearted-and-headed compositions of this class, and had one great advantage over the words themselves of the verses, inasmuch as they were absolutely nonsensical, and could have no meaning whatever unless it were implied by a wink, a leer, a nod, or grimace on the part of the too broadly-comic vocalist. Not that there was in those days, or in those nights, much reticence practised in singing about any subject, no matter what it might be: a spade was not only called a spade but something more, emphasised by an adjective, and what nowadays would be suppressed in a police report was given in full, amid laughter and applause, by these comic singers in their so-called "comic songs." They were not

printed, published, and sold at the doors, nor could you obtain them at the musicsellers, but they were written out by the comic singer himself, and copies sold to anyone who could command ready money from two-and-sixpence up to five shillings apiece. At my tutor's (that is at Cookesley's, when I was between fifteen and sixteen) we used to hold a "sing-song" in imitation of "Evans's," or of "the Cider Cellars"; and as I possessed a piano, and played it sufficiently well for our indulgent audience, with burnt cork and paints we "made up" our faces, and with any old clothes "faked up" costumes, and so contrived to give a very enjoyable, if not highly intellectual, entertainment. My part in this, I remember, was the imitation of one Ross, a comic singer, with more tragedy in him than comedy, who sang a horrid nightmarish song, entitled "Sam Hall."

I had heard of this song from my elders at the opera, and I was determined to hear it sung by Ross. I had heard Sir George Armytage at the opera describe how Thackeray had been delighted with it, and how everyone considered Ross "an artist," and, indeed, that if the song was so repulsive as to make the hearer shudder, yet was it, as acted and sung, "a great moral lesson." By the way, *à propos* of Thackeray and the Cider Cellars, I fancy that the "Cave of Harmony" in *The Newcomes* was intended for Evans's, as it was in its very earliest days when

songs were volunteered by *habitues*; but this was long before *my* introduction to that "Harmonious Hole."

So one night after I had been at the Covent Garden Opera with my father and one of my cousins, we two boys kindly released him from further attendance on us, and promising of course (I was a "very promising" boy at this period) to go straight home, we took our way *viâ* Maiden Lane (I quite forget how we had ascertained the *route*), and put in at the Cider Cellars. It must have been our first visit (I am quite certain it was my cousin's first at all events), at least I fancy it was, but I was acquainted with the place from having read about the peculiar entertainment there given in Albert Smith's *Man in the Moon*, *The Gent*, and, as I think, in *The Adventures of Mr. Ledbury*; also I had heard the place talked about in connection with the "C.C.C.," or "Cider Cellar Club," where, as I had gathered, the actors, the "wits," the men about town were wont to foregather o' nights, and whence they did not issue forth until long past "the chimes at midnight" had sounded. Theatres and opera house finished, as a rule, at eleven, although "the early closing movement" was a long way off. I piloted my cousin safely to the door in Maiden Lane, over which was a dingy lamp on which the words "Cider Cellars" stood out in large black letters. We crossed the threshold, our boldness oozing out

like Bob Acres' courage. Exploring, I looked straight before me, then right and left, and finally perceived a mysterious green baize door with an oval window of frosted glass, on which was inscribed "C.C.C." Here then was the room where literary and theatrical celebrities were assembled. Cautiously I pushed the door open and stepped in. A room, nothing more, with tables and benches: not a soul present! Seeing that this would not be a lively place wherein to pass a happy evening, we descended, myself leading, a narrow staircase, at the foot of which on the left-hand side was a small open "bar," whereat served a tall elderly man, whose name was, I afterwards learnt, Brumfit, the proprietor or landlord of the establishment, assisted by a good-looking, quiet-mannered, business-like barmaid, with raven black hair and a rather sallow complexion, whom everyone of the inner circle, that is who had the *entrée* to the "C.C.C.," addressed as "Harriet." Whether Mr. Brumfit and this barmaid were surprised at the apparition of two boys within these sacred precincts, or whether they thought we had come there by invitation, I do not know; all I remember is that we coolly walked into the private supper-room communicating with the bar, where were seated several gentlemen, mostly in evening dress, some taking a light supper, some smoking, all with good-sized tumblers of various "grogs" before them, all evidently enjoying them-

selves thoroughly. Naturally enough some of them stared hard at us, but our entrance did not interfere with the conversation, and having diffidently taken our seats in a corner, I summoned up sufficient courage to tell "Louisa," a nice-looking assistant barmaid, that we would take some poached eggs and draught "bitter in a tankard." Personally I was awestruck, for Thackeray was present! also Sir Charles Ibbetson, Andrew Arcedeckne, and Lord Exmouth (I learnt their names some years afterwards), with two or three others, whose faces were familiar to me as occupants of stalls near my father's at the opera.

Scarcely had our supper been placed before us, when a waiter rushed downstairs shouting excitedly, "Sam 'All, gentlemen." Whereupon down went knives and forks, glasses were drained, or left on the table to await their owner's return, and out everybody rushed, Thackeray leading. We hurriedly ascended the narrow staircase opposite to that by which we had entered, and following as best we might, pushed past the *habitués* of the C.C.C. who remained standing by the entrance, to find ourselves in the real "Cider Cellars," that is in a large room, crammed full of persons drinking, eating, and smoking, the atmosphere being thick with tobacco smoke, through which we made our way to two chairs; whence, having politely requested the waiter to fetch the supper we had left behind us, we regarded

the dais at the end, elevated some four or five feet from the floor, on which was a dirty, weary-looking man playing a grand piano, a vacant chair for the use of the performer when he should appear, and a screen, behind which the aforesaid performer, Ross, was at that moment "making up" for his great impersonation of "The Condemned Chimney Sweep," who it had been supposed was spending his last night on earth in singing this fearful song. I have heard Thackeray and others praise the marvellous acting of this man singing this dirge. It so deeply impressed me I know, that I have never forgotten it, and never shall. That we joined in the applause was to be expected; but that I should be, after a little while, back at Eton giving in my own rooms what I considered a perfect imitation of Ross in this character, may be taken as a proof that my appreciation of it as a work of art had quite banished any scruples I may have entertained. As to the character of the song, I heard it several times, and so knew the words perfectly. Certainly, between fifteen and sixteen, some of us were somewhat "advanced," and we obtained considerable encouragement from those who were our seniors by two or three years. The songs sung at festive gatherings at "The Christopher" and elsewhere were but repetitions of those that had been picked up in MS. for the "ridiculously small sum" of two-and-sixpence apiece. All this convivial licence was but some of

the leavings of the Tony Lumpkin age; and at the time I speak of the "Cider Cellars" in Maiden Lane and the "Coal Hole" in the Strand, while affording "entertainment to man and beast," allowed that for "the beast" to preponderate.

At Evans's it was somewhat different. Its master, Paddy Green, who succeeded D'Arcy Evans (*vidi tantum*, when once revisiting his old haunts, on which occasion Paddy Green, as chairman, rose and proposed his health, which we all drank with enthusiasm), kept everything up to highly respectable "concert pitch" till twelve had struck, and then it was more "pitch" than concert, and such pitch as could not be touched without some nastiness clinging to you for a long time. Everybody liked Paddy Green: he was "dear old Paddy" to all, and indeed he was in his way a remarkable man. He had carried a hod; had assisted at the building of Her Majesty's Theatre; had worked at his trade in Dublin and in London; had been heard to sing among his mates; had taken a dislike to being "hod man out"; and had been accepted as one of the chorus at the opera; not only that, but he came out strong at the Catholic chapel in Warwick Street, where Paul Bedford (before he went on the stage), M. Begrez (teacher of music and accompanist to opera singers), and several other musical celebrities were already employed, with an orchestra to accompany them, in singing at the High Mass on Sundays.

The orchestra here was open to anyone who, being considered a fit and proper person by the conductor, cared to attend, rehearse, and make one of the regular musicians. Here my Uncle Theophilus, a proficient on the violoncello, used, as he has frequently informed me, to obtain some of his best practice, and through this became acquainted with such classical and also sacred music as he would not have learnt elsewhere. Two or three of his musical companions joined him in this, which I rather fancy must have been the start of those "*quartette*" evenings *chez lui* which are among my very earliest recollections.

CHAPTER VIII

ETON—CHANGE OF SCENE—DURNFORD'S TO
COOKESLEY'S—DISCIPLINE—TUTORIAL VISITS
—SMOKING—MONSIEUR MALET—YOUTHFUL
AUTHOR—TWO DISTINGUISHED CHARACTERS
—AJAX—*VOX CLAMANTIS*—EXPLANATION

EXCEPT that in my second year at Eton I was summoned back from home on the very first afternoon of the first day of the summer holidays, to receive a healthy swishing at the hand of the head-master for the crime of having anticipated the holidays by some hours, and "taken French leave" with another and more hardened sinner than myself, the school times passed away much as all Eton school times pass away with those who have no other interest in Etonian life than to get the most amusement out of it that is consistent with keeping up a respectable appearance before your *confrères*, and a fair reputation for average work and conduct at your tutor's and with your masters. To arrive at that haven of rest where you can neither fag nor be fagged is a great point, and this was by me duly achieved. Thence I went to the Upper Lower Fifth, and at

this point I fortunately escaped being "turned down," with which punishment I had been threatened, because, by merest luck, headmaster and tutor had hurried away for their holidays and had forgotten all about me and my escapade (of "French leave"), as above mentioned. So I was forgiven because forgotten. On my return I had the ill-luck to get into another slight difficulty of a temporary character, which my tutor, "Judy," felt he could not possibly overlook. I quite forgave him, and indeed was not displeased with his decision. My father would have been (very naturally, as not being an Etonian himself) much distressed by my tutor's refusal to allow me to remain in his house, had I not, at the instigation of a youthful companion, suggested that at Eton there were more masters than one, not to mention "Dame's houses"; and that there was an opening for a likely lad in the house of one of the seniors, who was acknowledged to be one of the very cleverest of all the Eton masters, the Rev. Gifford Cookesley to wit. To him therefore, after a short stay at home of a couple of weeks or so, I was brought, my father having already interviewed him on the subject, and the Rev. Gifford having laughed at the Rev. Durnford's plain reasons and expressed his entire willingness to take me in among his pupils. I had already several friends at Cookesley's, and I soon had several more, among whom I may count the Rev. Gifford Cookesley, my tutor, as

one of the best, and so he remained long after we had both of us, master and pupil, left Eton for good. Until I went to "Cooke'sley" I had been a mere tyro in the ways and means of enjoying life at Eton. Our tutor, beloved by all of us, was undoubtedly a first-rate scholar, a very well read man all round, but as eccentric as he was clever, brimful of humour, rollicking in his fun, but bitter satirical in his remarks about nearly all other dignitaries, from the provost downwards. In school business he was generally at loggerheads with the authorities; and differing from the majority of them in politics, he, with perhaps two other "evangelicals" and liberals, was utterly at variance with the majority of masters and dignitaries, who were what was then considered "High Church," though of this distinction I knew very little until I heard my tutor's "chaff" about their Puseyism, or as he used to call it "Pussyism," which, as he would say, "You won't find in the Church Catty-chism—eh, your Majesty?" "Your Majesty" was the nickname he gave me. All his favourite pupils he nicknamed, and he never could mention anyone of those so distinguished without a chuckle, indeed several chuckles, expressive of the greatest possible relish, either of the absurd inappropriateness of the name, or remembering the occasion when, being in most jocose humour, he had bestowed it on his pupil, who probably went through the world with it. Give a boy at Eton a really good nickname, and

he can't get rid of it,—it will stick to him through life, no matter what titles, what honours, may afterwards be heaped upon him; no matter how big a man, how important a personage, he may become. Henry Malet, for example, was always “Monsieur” at my tutor's, though this nickname was quite unknown to the school generally; and this was true of all the nicknames conferred on us at various times of exhilaration by our tutor. “Monsieur's” brother or “Malet *mi*,” Edward Malet (both of them, as all the world knows, were distinguished in diplomatic life), was christened “Pussy”; while Keighly Peach (afterwards in the Life Guards) was “Paychum” or sometimes “Polly Peach,” from the *Beggar's Opera*. I forget what nicknames fell to the lot of Dick Biddulph and Hodge and other *aquales*, except that “Palk *Major*” was “Ajax.” Outside Cookesley's these names were not commonly applied. One of my tutor's pupils was Charles Dickens, eldest son of the great novelist, and it has ever been to me a matter of curiosity to know why Dickens, who went out of his way to learn so much and to write so admirably about all sorts of schools, never interested himself in Eton where his eldest son received his education. I do not remember any allusion, of any sort, to Eton in any of his works. If Disraeli, who had nothing whatever to do with the school, could so cleverly sketch Eton life in *Coningsby* as to make that novel one of the first recommended to an

Etonian as absolutely correct in every detail, as far as it went, how much more popular and of how far greater value would have been an Eton boy and Eton generally, as depicted by Charles Dickens, who could have learnt every little detail that he did not acquire by personal observation "on the spot" from his son, who was there for full four years! It is to me a problem. Young Charles was at a Dame's (Myddleton's, I think), and my tutor's pupil-room was where he and I used to meet, though otherwise I saw very little of him.

"Cookesley's" enjoyed more liberty than did any other house, Dame's or Tutor's, at Eton. Our tutor, Cookesley, was very fond of the drama in any form, from the classic Greek down to the latest farce, and in this matter differed from his sister and relatives, who were, every one of them, ultra-evangelical; very strict, but truly kind and charitable. It delighted our tutor to take a party of his house-pupils up to Windsor Theatre at night (of course quite occasionally, and only as a great treat) to see whatever performance happened to be then going on. If there were any very young members of the company, our tutor would go behind the scenes and tip them handsomely. On our return to his house he would have a good supper ready for us, and being in high spirits would indulge us (a first-rate audience of course, considering the circumstances) with imitations



of popular actors, which amused us intensely, adapting quotations to us individually as he walked up and down the dining-room or stood on the hearth-rug, hoisting up his coat-tails with both hands, and looking about right and left, putting his head on one side, cocking an eye in such a marvellously knowing manner, as might be assumed by a preternaturally clever old bird, who was not, if he knew it, to be caught by chaff. I am pretty certain that these "theatre and supper afterwards" parties were unheard of outside "my tutor's." As he very seldom "put his nose in where he was not wanted," so it followed that he rarely visited our rooms. Sometimes, in consequence, perhaps, of representations being made to him by his sister, who acted as housekeeper and looked after us generally, he would make a hurried inspection of our apartments, and come in suddenly "on the pounce." Well do I remember his sudden appearance in "Monsieur's" (Malet major's) room, where we used occasionally to indulge in a surreptitious cigar. On this occasion, as it was not long since we had finished smoking, my tutor came in brusquely, sniffed, and eyed us, with his head on one side like the knowing old bird he affected to be. We, Monsieur, myself, and one or two other innocents, regarded one another inquiringly as if quite at a loss to guess what on earth there was in the room that should set my tutor a sniffing in this manner. "Um!

your Majesty?" he would say, with a note of interrogation in his eye. "Um! Monsieur?" to Malet, with another note for him. We were silent.

"You've been smoking," he asserted sternly, yet always comically.

"Smoking, sir?" Malet would repeat hesitatingly, "not having a lie handy," as Lord Charles Beresford put it, when being unable to give an excuse for coming late to a dinner-party, he told the plain truth.

"Smoking, sir?" repeated our tutor, imitating Monsieur's manner so perfectly as to send me off into a fit of irresistible laughter. Powers of mimicry softened his heart towards us, and disposed him to pardon us there and then.

"Yes, smoking," he repeated, "eh, your Majesty?" with a queer glance at me.

"And where are the cigars, eh?" he asked, moving his head about in every direction.

"Cigars, sir?" repeated Malet, looking straight before him. "I don't see any, sir."

"No, of course, you dunderheaded Mossoo, of course you don't," he retorted explosively; "*but I do.*" Then pointing to the top of the bureau, where a box full of Havannahs was unblushingly displayed. "Fetch 'em down."

And Mossoo, making a grimace aside at me, proceeded to do as he had been told, and handed the box to my tutor.

"Nasty filthy habit," snapped my tutor.

"Please, sir, they were given to me," pleaded Mossoo.

"Oh, were they?" returned my tutor; "very well—I've a good mind to make you, both of you, write out and translate a hundred lines"—here our faces lengthened considerably—"but I'll let you off this time"—

"Oh, thank you, sir," from us all.

"Only—mind, if I catch you again"—here he paused on the Virgilian "*quos ego*" principle, and then added, "I'll give 'em you back at the end of the school time, Mossoo"; and so saying, with the box of choice Havannahs under his arm, he marched out and disappeared. After this "custom house" sort of visit we did not expect to see him again in our quarter for several weeks.

It was at Cookesley's, and at his suggestion, that we performed my first play, "by request," and also *Bombastes Furioso*. It was in consequence of my playing King Artaxominous that I was, by my tutor, ever after addressed as "Your Majesty."¹

¹ I have found the printed copy of my first farce, *Guy Fawkes Day*. It was "performed either in 1852 (or 1853), in the Easter school time." I fancy 1853 is the correct date. It was, so goes the *mem.* on the *Dramatis Personæ*, "preceded by 'a slight Prologue' by the same author, and followed by *Slasher and Crusher* by Maddison Morton." "Scenery by Mr. Harrison, architect, under the direction of F. C. Burnald."

Until I recovered this evidence, I was under the impression that *Bombastes Furioso* formed part of *this* entertainment. *Bombastes*,

At my tutor's I met Montagu Williams, who was a "tug," that is a "colleger," and in the sixth form, coming out in knee-breeches and evening dress, which was the costume *de rigueur* for those who had to make "speeches" in "upper school" on "Speech Days." Of Montagu I hope to have something to say later, as, though we never spoke to one another at Eton, he being so much my senior and so far above me in school, we were destined in after-life to be the greatest friends, and for some little time *collaborateurs* in plays for Robson at the Olympic and for the Wigans at the St. James's. All I remember of "Bob" Williams (the "Montagu" was never heard at Eton)

I take it, was given by us at Christmas, and in consequence of its success we got up the original farce for the next performance.

The cast was—

Mr. Soapeton	A. COOKESLEY.
Mr. Tickleton (his cousin)	F. C. BURNAND.
Cracks (a swell-mobsman)	E. B. MALET.
John	H. SMITH.
Buttons	W. PALK.
Cook	M. BIDDULPH.
Mrs. Soapeton	C. HODGE.
Two efficient members of the detective force	{ Messrs. OLDFIELD { and YONGE.

"Performance to begin punctually at half-past 7."

A. (*i.e.* "Gussy") Cookesley died, I think, soon after the Crimean War, when he was in the Commissariat Department; E. B. Malet is now Sir Edward Malet; H. Smith, popularly known, after he left Eton, as "Nugget Smith" (2nd Life Guards), who in after-life "went under," I'm afraid, and disappeared; Wilmot Palk, dead; Myddleton Biddulph, a retired colonel, owner of Chirk Castle; Messrs. Hodge, Oldfield, and Yonge I have never, to my knowledge, met since these Eton days.

was that he was sometimes addressed as “Shiney” (quoted and applied by my tutor, who remembered Dickens’s “Shiney Villum,” the ostler) and sometimes as “Sinner.” Why “Sinner” I haven’t an idea. Why “Shiney,” was, because he had long, raven-black hair, which he used assiduously to pomade. “Shiney” was evident at a glance.

Well do I remember a little chap at Eton, at what Tutor’s or Dame’s I forget, standing in a mooning sort of way by the wall at Eton, near the corner where Spankie dispensed to his clients the goods that Spankie provided. A pale-visaged, unhealthy-looking boy he was, with a remarkably large hat, covering a head which was out of all symmetrical proportion to the small and dapperly attired little body. His name, I ascertained, was Swinburne. I do not remember ever having set eyes on him again at Eton. But to forget him, as a boy, was impossible. Years afterwards, seeing Algernon Swinburne, the poet, at the Arts Club, I at once recognised in him Spankie’s little client, whose name I had asked some fifteen years before. It so happens that, at the Arts Club, a *co-æqualis Etonensis* and a very stolid matter-of-fact young man, was, on this occasion, my companion. He was not a member of the club (to which, by the way, I had the pleasure of belonging in its very earliest days), and as the poet went out, I said to my friend, “That’s

Swinburne." He regarded me interrogatively. I explained, "Swinburne, the poet."

"No!!" he exclaimed, rushing to the door and peering after the retreating figure with a kind of awe depicted on his countenance. Then he returned, and repeated in a low tone, indicating a certain incredulity—

"*That! That—Swinburne, the poet!!*"

I answered, "Yes, that's the very man. Why?"

"Why!" he repeated; then, as if utterly dumb-founded by the discovery, he exclaimed, "*Why, he was at school with us!!*"

"*Us*" was lovely. That so distinguished a person as Swinburne could ever have been at school with "the likes" of two such commonplace persons as self and friend was, to the latter, a discovery so far-reaching in its consequences that I thought he would never have got over it. Perhaps he never has: for the moment it totally unhinged him. Be this as it may, *I never saw him again*. His disappearance (as far as I am concerned) dates from the evening ever memorable for the identification of Swinburne with the small boy who used to buy tarts of Spankie "at the wall" of Eton College.

Before I quit this pleasant time at Eton, I must recount a scene in which my tutor figured to the immense amusement of all his pupils. There was a practical-joking boy, now a sedate member of the Legislature, who was in possession of a trifling

incident in the life of a contemporaneous Etonian, one of my tutor's upper-form pupils, yclept "Palk Ma," but known to us as christened by the Rev. Gifford Cookesley, "Ajax." Why "Ajax" I never learnt; but he was "Ajax" long before I arrived, and "Ajax" he remained till his departure.

Now "Ajax," as a sixth-form boy, was invariably "put on" to construe when the others in pupil-room had either signally failed or had been so long "humming and hawing" over their Homer as to cause our tutor (in summer time, and hot at that) to frequently rub his light curly hair violently, and exclaim (not in elegant, classic, or English, language) petulantly, "Barnish your lousy head, you stupid ass!" and in despair to call upon his son Gussy Cookesley or Ajax Palk for a rapid and correct reading of the passage in question, whereat the clever cohort of fools, including "His Majesty," "Mossoo," "Paychum," and a few others, would chuckle and bring out their pencils in order to note down every word, and so have their lesson ready by eleven o'clock school. Thus it came about that, one hot summer morning, tutor and boys were all intent on their work, with only about forty minutes to complete it. The window was wide open—you could step out of it on to the walk outside; the door of pupil-room was also wide open, leading on to a passage from which the exit on to the school walk was by the house door (for pupils), likewise open.

Now, on this particular morning, when we, the "lazy noodle brigade," were more than usually dense, the flies more than usually troublesome, a wasp or so giving a look in and invariably making for my tutor, who, "with vest unbuttoned," tie awry, and hair as ruffled by his right hand as was his temper by our stupidity, was fast losing any good temper that he might have had at the commencement of the lesson, and was becoming more and more irritable every second, there came a voice, clear as the one that in the poem uttered "Excelsior," which cried out "Ullo! Dumpkins!"

We were all aghast! Considered by itself there is nothing very terrible in the word "Dumpkins." It suggested nothing in particular, yet, somehow, everything in general. My tutor paused in his reference to "the learned scholiast," put his head on one side, cocked his right ear, eyed us, but listened inclining towards the window. No further repetition of the cry. We looked at one another—wondering. Then we began to smile. Why we smiled it would be impossible to say. But—that smile was fatal. Clearly, to our tutor's mind, that smile was one of recognition. It proved to him that all who were smiling *must* be in the conspiracy, of which "Dumpkins" was the watch-word. He eyed us sternly, curiously; sniffed suspiciously; drew a long breath, and then, trying to continue as if nothing particular had happened, or that the voice had been merely something "in the

air,” or that he had “imagined it,” he recommenced with severe emphasis—

“Well, as I was saying, as to this passage, which has been much disputed by various commentators, the learned scholiast remarks”—here he fishes up a ponderous book with equally ponderous notes, and slowly repeats—“the learned scholiast remarks”—
—“Dumpkins!”

It was the voice again! Whence? whose?

My tutor paused not half a second; out of the window he went; on to the walk; down to the low wall that bordered the high road; looked to the right of him, looked to the left of him. But . . . “some one had blundered”—that is, *he* had; for not the slightest vestige of boy, bird, man, or beast was to be seen anywhere. He looked up at the windows opposite; not a sign; not a laugh; not a sound. Then he returned, by the door. We had just time to ask, “What might this portend?” to inquire rapidly in undertones, “Do *you* know who it was?” But if any boy did know, he didn’t tell, and only one there was aware of what “Dumpkins” meant—only one, and he, you may depend upon it, never gave us any clue, either then or subsequently. It was, even to us, most mysterious. My tutor returned, glowering. Then he asked majestically—

“Does any one here know who called out ‘Dumpkins’?”

No one did. My tutor pounced upon all those

who, he considered, would probably be "in the know," but in every instance he drew blank. One or two upper boys he asked. *They* didn't know.

"Gussy," he inquired of his eldest son, "do you know?"

No; Gussy was as ignorant and as innocent as the others. The only one who could have given him any information he never asked: that one was "Ajax."

"I've a great mind to 'complain' of you all," he said, scowling at the assembly. Whereat the nervous looked glum, while the foolish tittered.

Once more he appealed; and we collectively assured him emphatically, on our honour, that we knew nothing whatever about "Dumpkins."

"I swear I'll find out," declared my tutor, "and mind"—here he shook his head at us menacingly—"if I discover that any one of you here is mixed up in this, I'll have him so soundly swished as will make him cry out something very different to"—

"Dumpkins!" shouted the voice from, as it appeared, just outside, behind my tutor's back!

Not a second lapsed; out went my tutor brandishing a huge book—the ends of his white tie flying—out this time by the door, not by the window, thus giving the owner of the voice that had been, as they say in stage directions, "heard without," a minute or so "law." Up we all got, out of the window, out at the door; not rushing, but yet eagerly, in time to see my tutor, capless, his gown flying, pursuing

nothing in particular as fast as he could stride (it was not a run) down towards Barnes Bridge, stopping only for half a minute to look round the corner on his left where there was a chance of the fugitive having sought safety; here a lounging "cad," one of the regulars, whose existence would have been forfeit had he aided and abetted a boy as against a master, touching his hat, evidently replied to my tutor's question by pointing towards Barnes Bridge. My tutor pursued his course, then suddenly pulled up right on Barnes Bridge, for it had evidently occurred to him, as it had done to us all, that if the culprit had fled down town he must return by this, the only way, in order to be in time for eleven o'clock school, it being now just within a few minutes of the hour. In the meantime we asked one another why my tutor was so irritated at hearing any one call out "Dumpkins." No one could explain. It was a mystery. However, there stood my tutor on Barnes Bridge, just drawing himself a little on one side so as to be out of the way of the wheels of the old rattling 'bus that used to ply between Windsor and the railway station at Slough. The driver touched his hat to my tutor, and begged pardon for having so closely shaved him; my tutor hardly took any notice of him, but kept his eyes fixed on Eton Street. The 'bus rattled on through Eton and disappeared.

Eleven struck. The masters came from their different houses to assemble in "chambers" for ten

minutes; but Cookesley did not budge. That boy who called out "Dumpkins" was to be caught, and, explanation or no explanation, he was to be flogged severely, ay, and perhaps "turned down" from his class, and given a long "poena," which would keep him in for the greater part of the next three weeks. These were the vows of vengeance our tutor was breathing; this was what he intended to do, as he fiercely informed us afterwards, had he caught the boy who had interrupted him in his lecture by shouting "Dumpkins."

Ten minutes past eleven. No Dumpkins. All the masters had disappeared into their several classrooms, and all the boys after them. Only the hum of the busy Etonian bees arose from the college hive. All at work everywhere, save only Cookesley and his division. The division began to think it was what was known as a "run," *i.e.* that the master wasn't coming, and therefore that there would be no eleven o'clock school. But the sight of my tutor returning from "keeping the bridge" demolished these vain hopes.

He had hit on an infallible plan. After his "præpostor" had taken down the names of all present, and found not a single absentee (unless on the sick-list), my tutor sent him round to all the classrooms for the purpose of inquiring of every master if any boy was missing. No; "the bills" were inspected; all the boys were there; not a single truant.

My tutor was bothered. We had all heard the cry of "Dumpkins." Yes; all. Had we recognised the voice? No, we hadn't. No more had he. So for that day there was an end of the matter. But for days and days afterwards, my tutor, standing by the open window during morning pupil-room, could only give a very divided attention to the lesson, being ever on the alert for the mysterious cry of "Dumpkins." The Eton policeman was put on the watch; the "cads" were warned and threatened, but nothing was ever again heard of the voice that cried "Dumpkins," nor did its owner come forward and acknowledge his guilt.

It was long after I had quitted Eton that the story (given as the true one, but not to be vouched for here) came out. Ajax, who stood much on his sixth-form dignity, and who was a "very proper" boy (most amiable, but generally considered as "very proper") was induced, much against his will, to accept an invitation to a picnic in Windsor Park. Here he went after four, and had been excused his six o'clock absence. It was a rowdy party of friends from London, and the only Eton boy as a guest was Palk *ma*. They all had too much champagne, and, on some utterly idiotic inspiration, "Ajax," at that midsummer *al fresco* orgie, was perpetually addressed as "Dumpkins," and in that character became "the cause of wit in others." A sudden thunderstorm scattered them, and Ajax was too glad to "defy the lightning" and flee for his life

and reputation from his companions, among whom was a syren, to whose pressing entreaties to him as "Dumpkins" to stay he turned a deaf ear and fled precipitately. The party who had come down for the day returned to town that same evening, all of them, that is, except the young lady, who happened to be on a visit to some friends near Slough.

Now our practical-joking schoolfellow mentioned above happened to be among the very few day-boarders at Eton living at his mother's house between Eton and Slough. The story about "Dumpkins" at the picnic was repeated in the presence, at home, of the aforesaid imitator of Theodore Hook. And he in a thoughtless moment of leisure before eleven o'clock school time wandered past Cookesley's, and thinking that the window of Ajax's room looked out *from above* on to the wall, and not seeing the pupil-room window open *below* and Cookesley close to it lecturing, had shouted out mischievously, "Ullo! Dumpkins!" to which, as has been already recorded, no attention was paid. The practical joker then suddenly catching sight of pupil-room full, and my tutor pausing in his lecture, thought that here was indeed an opportunity, and repeating the cry of "Ullo! Dumpkins!" bolted straight into the opening that led into Joynes's house on his left and lay *perdu* until my tutor had finished his search. Then, after waiting until Cookesley was safely in pupil-room and had recommenced lecturing, he ventured forth, treated

him to another cry of "Dumpkins," and being a very swift runner he was down the street and over Barnes Bridge just in time *to catch the railway omnibus*, the conductor of which had, as it happened, jumped off to leave a parcel. Taking advantage of his absence, our practical joker opened the door, nipped in, and hid himself under the seat. Luckily for him not a single passenger entered while driving through Eton, and directly they reached the corner of the college wall before entering on the Slough Road, up popped our young friend (his books in his hand, for he was prepared for eleven o'clock school, and had been only idling about "when Satan finds, etc. etc.," *vide* Dr. Watts), tipped the conductor, who shared with the driver, and then returned through the college and gained the school-yard in plenty of time, that is, before ten minutes past eleven, *to take his place in Cookesley's own class, to which he belonged!* This practical joker, though owning to many escapades of about the same date, never did anything "within measurable distance" of this—at least not to my knowledge.

CHAPTER IX

"SO, UNCLE, THERE YOU ARE"—HOLIDAY TIME
—LOLA MONTEZ—THE STORY OF THE BOOT-
HOOKS—THE PROMPTER—PRIVATE THEATRI-
CALS—*ALLER ET RETOUR*—MYSTERY SOLVED

I REMEMBER, in my holiday time, when riding in the Park with my father, seeing a striking-looking woman, a brunette with large flashing eyes, fashionably attired, driving a pair of "steppers." The entire "turn-out" was decidedly "showy," and created a great sensation. Loungers at the Park rails pointed out to one another its dashing driveress, and equestrians trotted and cantered past, turning their heads to get a view of her. She had already "turned" too many heads for her to regard a few more "turned heads" except with perfect *nonchalance*.

"That," said my father to me, "is the celebrated Lola Montez."

I was immensely interested, being as well posted up in her story as ought to have been, at that date, any student of *Punch* or of *The Man in the Moon*. But it was through a caricature representing the King of Bavaria as a trained horse being compelled

to perform his tricks at the bidding of Lola Montez, as a circus-mistress in Spanish dancer's dress, with a long driving whip in her hand, that I knew of her as a "European celebrity." I frequently used to come across her in the Park, and well remember as a boy wondering that any one could be fascinated by such a very "flashy" sort of person. I have called her "striking looking," and from some contemporary portraits I fancy that I am not far out when I limit myself to that. "Her *eyes* were her fortune, sir, she said," as far as looks went, but, any way, she was a daring, headstrong woman, dealing with an uncommonly weak monarch. She was staying in London, but had not as yet appeared, as she subsequently did for a short time, I believe, on the London stage. I perfectly remember, at a rather later time, as I fancy, the Spanish dancers and the catching tune associated with them, but I do not mix up Lola Montez with Perea Nena, and I am pretty certain I never saw Lola on the stage. I fancy not. But thereby hangs a tale, which I will introduce with a Pickwickian preface.

"'He was a wonderful man, that uncle of yours, though,' remarked the landlord, shaking his head.

"'Well, I think he was; I think I may say he was,' answered the one-eyed man. 'I could tell you a story about that same uncle, gentlemen, that would rather surprise you.'

"'Could you?' said Mr. Pickwick. 'Let us have it by all means.'

The foregoing quotation applies so aptly here that I make no apology for introducing it. And, again quoting the bagman, I may say, speaking of *my* Uncle Theophilus, that "he was one of the merriest, pleasantest, cleverest fellows that ever lived." He lived and died a bachelor, and was a perfect "Pacha of many tales." When he was a comparatively young and gay bachelor he resided in Bolton Street, Piccadilly, and of many amusing adventures of his I remember one in particular, specially interesting on account of the historic personage who figured in it.

My Uncle Theophilus, ladies and gentlemen, as I have already informed you, was a bachelor, "gay and light-hearted," as was, you may remember, the "jolly young waterman" in Dibdin's ballad. He was the responsible official in the Marine Insurance, and was uncommonly well off. He was a great theatre-goer, had his stall at the opera, perhaps at both houses when two were in full swing, gave small dinner parties at his own rooms, big ones at Long's Hotel (where he stayed for some years, leaving behind him, when he moved to a house of his own, many sorrowing waiters, bootsees, and chambermaids to mourn *their* loss), and occasional early dinners, before the theatre, at the Piazza Hotel, Covent Garden. He was never so happy as when he was entertaining his friends, and, personally speaking, I have never known his equal for generosity and hospitality shown

to everyone without distinction, though of course with a preference here and there. At any time of his life, as long, that is, as he could get about and stand fatigue, he was ready to say with sedate Dr. Johnson to his gay young friends, "I'm with you, boys," and join them in "a frolic."

To quote Dickens's bagman again, "Gentlemen, I wish your fathers and mothers had known my uncle. They would have been amazingly fond of him, especially your mothers, I know they would." And with him I may add, "You don't see a man like my uncle every day in the week." As a young man he must have been good looking, though not handsome; but even as I remember him, from the earliest date to the latest, "his eyes were always twinkling and sparkling with good humour, and a smile—not one of your unmeaning wooden grins, but a real, merry, hearty, good-tempered smile."

Now, at the time whereof I speak, about 1851, his bachelor quarters were in Bolton Street, Piccadilly, on the first floor. Here my father and myself, mounted, used to call for him to see if he were going to ride with us in the Park, and two or three times I remember paying him a visit in his most comfortable rooms. He was always engaged out to dine, to sup, or to go to a theatre or a dance; though the last he did not much affect, preferring music parties and, generally, musical society.

Now, one evening in summer it so chanced that

some friend whom he had invited to a *tête-à-tête* dinner at Long's, having at the last moment disappointed him, he was left free without any engagement of any sort. He was always fond of reading, and with that and music, time never hung heavily on his hands, even if compelled to stay at home *solus cum solo*—on the violoncello.

He had been round to "Long's" for dinner, had found there no companion, had sat for a while talking to Mrs. Jubber, the good-looking hostess, who, with her husband, conducted that expensive establishment, and as, at that time, he did not belong to any club, he had finally strolled back quietly to his rooms, wondering to himself, for the sake of thinking about something, who the lady might be that, the week before, had taken the upper part furnished of the house in which he was lodging. He hadn't seen her; she was quiet, as far as he knew, but his experience was limited, as he used to leave for the City before ten in the morning, returning about half-past four, for a few minutes, or not till dinner-time if he dined at home, and then he believed the lady had been invariably out. He had, however, noticed a dapper "tiger" in top-boots, a sharp-looking, spry boy under five feet high, who, it appeared, so the maid informed him, was the lady's servant. "And who is the lady?" my uncle naturally inquired.

"Mrs. James, sir, is her name," was the information he received. And so far he had not been

particularly interested. This night, however, on returning, he noticed the windows of the floor above brilliantly lighted up; he opened the street door with his latch-key, and met one or two busy looking men descending with baskets, and the maid of the house assisting another maid (a stranger to my uncle) in carrying up some packages, a hat and feathers which might have suited the contralto page, Urbino I think is his name, in *Les Huguenots*, likewise some garments suspiciously resembling the same operatic character's "trunks and hose."

My uncle, ladies and gentlemen, was devoted to both opera and drama: he was himself no inconsiderable performer on the violoncello, and was an accomplished amateur actor. So seeing these reminders of the *coulisses* (he used to have the *entrée* at the opera in times preceding this date) he was decidedly *intrigué*.

The maids were in too great a hurry to attend to him: they couldn't answer him on the stairs, they wouldn't answer his bell either; and so after some time he decided not to bother himself, and having by the aid of his boot-jack drawn off his patent leather "Hessians" (he continued to wear them for years until he substituted "Bluchers" for them, just as my Uncle George stuck to his "frilled" shirt front all his lifetime) he sat down, *en déshabille*, to quietly and contentedly enjoy (without tobacco, for he was no smoker, and without any "toddy," for he only

"consumed" at dinner) the latest novel of the day; perusing which, he fell into a pleasant doze. A knock at the door aroused him. A second awoke him, and without moving he called out, "Come in!"

Whereupon the door was opened, and there appeared the little perky "tiger" belonging to the "lady above."

"Hallo!" exclaimed my uncle. "What do *you* want?"

"Please, sir," answered the sharp boy—as sharp as "Bailey Junior" in the service of Montagu Tig, Esq.—"ave you got a pair of boot-'ooks as you could spare?"

"Why?" asked my uncle.

"Oh, 'cos my missus wants 'em," answered the boy.

"Your missus?" repeated my uncle, rather astonished at a lady requiring such articles at any time of the day, let alone at night-time, when persons take off their boots previous to putting on slippers *en route* for bed. "And who is your 'missus'?"

The boy jerked his head up as he answered,

"Next floor, sir."

"Oho!" quoth my uncle, probably beginning to think that his evening at home might not be so solitary as he had expected. "Then—is your mistress's name Mrs. James?"

"Yes, sir," answered the boy; "Mrs. James."

"And what does *she* want with boot-hooks?" continued my uncle, displaying very natural curiosity.

"To pull on her boots, of course," answered the boy cheekily. "And they ain't got not a pair in the 'ouse, so the maid said as you 'ad, but she couldn't get 'em as you was in; so missus sent me. And then"—he started in a listening attitude—"she's a-callin'."

And she was demanding to know "why on earth he didn't bring up those boot-hooks?"

"I'll take them myself," said my uncle, jumping up, when, becoming aware of his *déshabille*, he said, "No—look here, my boy, tell Mrs. James I will lend her my boot-hooks if she will promise to show me the boots *when she has got them on*." The boy grinned and hesitated. "Here, my boy," said my uncle, "here's half a crown for you. Now you be off, and bring me the answer."

Bailey Junior vanished. When he returned he found my uncle dressed, his "Hessians" on, awaiting him with the boot-hooks.

"Well?" demanded my uncle.

"Mrs. James's compliments," said the imp, "and she says she'll show you 'em as she goes down."

"Take 'em, my lad," said my uncle, delivering over the boot-hooks, "and say she will find me ready whenever *she* is."

Again the boy mounted the stairs. Laughter was heard above.

"She's a funny one," thought my uncle.

Then he set the door wide open, quickly com-

pleted his toilet in his dressing-room, provided himself with the "sinews of war," threw his light opera-cloak over his shoulders, and, with *chapeau-bras*, remained at a few paces from the open door watching for the lady's descent. Five, ten, fifteen minutes. The boy rushed down—couldn't be stopped. Boy up again at same pace. My uncle heard him announce, "Carriage here, mum, and coachman were to say will you please come at once as it's getting late."

"I come!" answered the invisible lady.

Down rushed the boy, giving an impudent look at my uncle as he passed by the open door. Sound of door opening above! A rustle! Ladies and gentlemen, shall I say that my uncle's heart did not beat several throbs quicker? Of course it did. He heard a step on the stairs. Somebody was descending. In another second the full light from his own lamp (carefully placed for the purpose) fell on the figure of a lady enveloped in a cloak, and wearing the sort of hat and feathers that used to distinguish a nobleman at the court of gallant Henri of Navarre! Could my uncle believe his eyes! Yes—no doubt of it—he was awake—very wide awake too.

The youthful noble paused on the landing. My uncle was prepared with his best obeisance to receive the mysterious stranger, who, advancing into the room, and facing the light threw back the cloak, discovering to my uncle's view the shapely form of

a lady attired in the gorgeous costume of the above-mentioned period. Then, as she extended her left leg, pointing to the gold-fringed boot, she exclaimed dramatically, "*Hé bien ! monsieur ? parole d'honneur ! Me voici !*"

What could my uncle do? Well, gentlemen, what would any one of *you* have done? Gay, fond of adventure, and a bachelor! Well, to make a long story as short as possible, he ascertained that Mrs. James was going out to some amateur theatricals, to which, she regretted, my uncle could not possibly be admitted. She mentioned names, but their owners were unknown to him personally, although they were familiar as "household words" to those acquainted with what French journalists used to call "*high life*."

No, she was *désolée*, but he must not detain her now: "*il faut partir*." She spoke French perfectly; so did my uncle, who having spent the earlier part of his life abroad, was proficient in Italian and French, with a smattering of German.

One moment—*no, merci*—she would not take anything, no, not even the very wee-est drop of champagne (in those days there were only "wee drappits" of "cham," very pink, in tall narrow glasses)—no, really she must go. "*Regardez, mon ami*," she said, showing him a roll of paper, "*c'est le rôle que je vais jouer*."

"*Pas possible de jouer sans un siffleur*," said my

uncle, suddenly struck with a brilliant idea, "*je vais vous accompagner comme votre siffleur particulier.*"

Mrs. James was so tickled at the idea that in order to save time and avoid delay, and also probably for the sake of having a companion during the drive, after a very slight hesitation (you see time pressed), she consented.

The imp reappeared, tumbling upstairs in his violent hurry.

"Please 'm, coachman says"—

Mrs. James cut him short in broken English.

"Go down. *Allez !* I come." And to my uncle, "*Venez avec moi. Allons !*" And she led the way, he following. In for a penny in for a pound ; but my uncle cared very little for either.

Into the carriage, and away they went. Arrived at the house, which was not at a very great distance, Mrs. James handed the MS. rôle to my uncle, introduced him at his own request as "Signor Botti," without whose assistance she could not possibly risk an appearance in the part. Whereupon he was received with more or less cordiality, was taken to the wing where Mrs. James would make her first entrance, and where he had to remain during the entire performance (it was a long one-act piece, in three scenes, playing about an hour and a half without an interval) only seeing her for a second or two now and then, able to make neither head nor tail of "the part," which every ten minutes or so she snatched from his

hand in order to refresh her memory, paying not the slightest attention to his compliments, except to whisper excitedly, "*taisez vous, taisez vous !*" and finally she disappeared altogether. The piece was over.

A servant came to show my uncle the way to the supper-room. Expecting to meet Mrs. James, he followed the servant and joined a large, brilliant, and somewhat noisy party, where, apparently, every one knew every one else, and he was literally "out of it." However, being there, he made the best of it, looking about everywhere for his handsome companion. He could not catch a glimpse of her. It was getting on for two ; music and dancing had now taken the place of theatricals, but though he walked through two salons carefully searching, Mrs. James was nowhere visible. At last there was no help for it ; he left, and was lucky to get a hackney-coach, and still happier to reach Bolton Street and tumble into bed. But before he subsided into "the arms of Morpheus" he determined that next morning he would renew the acquaintance—"for Mrs. James was undoubtedly partial—and he—was—well—she's a very handsome—charming—but where did she get to?" . . . and so he fell asleep.

Waking late the same morning he had to hurry off to the City. The boy in top-boots was not on the stairs ; the housemaid hadn't seen him, nor had any one been up to Mrs. James, who, she thought, "must ha' come 'ome uncommon late." "The other maid?"

"Oh no; *she* only came last night *with* the dress. The things were all outside to be fetched." And my uncle saw the wicker baskets and parcels and packages and boxes awaiting the man from the *costumier's*. So he wrote a short note intimating his "intention of giving himself the pleasure of calling to see Mrs. James about five, and hoping to find her none the worse," etc. etc. Then off to the City, where, you may be sure, gentlemen, he did not remain one moment longer than was compulsorily necessary.

"You gave Mrs. James my note?" he inquired of the maid on re-entering the house in Bolton Street.

"Oh, please, sir, yes. Mrs. Forbes (that was the landlady) arst me to say as she would be glad to see you directly as you come in."

"Certainly. But did you give that letter to Mrs. James?"

"Yes, sir," answered the maid; "I give it her just as she was gone off."

"Oh, she has gone out. To the Park?" asked my uncle, determining to follow.

"Oh, is that you, Mr. Burnand?" called out Mrs. Forbes, appearing from below—a very tidy, pleasant, elderly, housekeeping sort of body. "Oh, sir. Mrs. James was compelled to leave, but she said you would kindly attend to this for her," and she handed the letter to my uncle.

A *billet doux*! Ah! this was going to be an adventure. It was to this effect: "*Mon très cher*

(that was nice!). *Il faut que je pars—presto! Ayez la bonté de régler ces petits notes et nous allons nous entendre après. C'est si peu, n'est ce pas? et quel drôle d'aventure! Aha, mon siffleur! Sifflez, sifflez, et l'oiseau reviendra*"

If my uncle had a fault it was his excessive good nature. And, he reasoned, "if the bird be soon returning"—Well, gentlemen, how would any *galant homme* among you have replied?

"Here's the man from the stables," sir, said the landlady, and up came a respectable livery stable coachman authorised to receipt the bill. *Carriage for the whole night.* Ahem! My uncle couldn't go into details before the landlady, who merely observed that "she wished she'd known before that Mr. Burnand was a friend of Mrs. James's, who was a very nice lady," and so forth. So my uncle thought it better (in view of the return of the *oiseau*) to say, "Yes, it was all right; that he happened to have been going to the same party last night," and so explained it. Then arrived the *costumier* for *his* little account. Phew! This was included in the little *notes* of the *oiseau*.

Well, gentlemen, the cost of that evening's entertainment was just on fifty pounds. But then, like Marlbourck,

"Elle
Reviendra à Pâques
Ou à la Trinité."

But we know how that song ended—

“La Trinité se passe,
Marlbrouck ne revient pas.”

And so it was with Mrs. James. As the old Virginny plantation chorus has it—

“She never came back no more.”

Her trunks and her hose had been returned to the *costumiers*, and, then, . . . a gentleman came one day during my uncle's absence and discharged the rent for Mrs. James's rooms. The lady had taken them for only a fortnight, and had paid half on coming into possession, and nothing on going out. An hour afterwards the “tiger” appeared to fetch “a pair of boot-hooks as he'd lent to the gentleman on the first floor.” Appealed to, the maid did remember having seen them in Mrs. James's room (rather compromising evidence this, gentlemen, eh?), and also in my uncle's, to whom, as the boy said, his “missus had lent 'em.” So that was all right.

“Bring me my boot-hooks,” said my uncle, after ringing the bell twice, while dressing to go out to dinner.

“Please, sir,” replied the handmaid, “Mrs. James sent her servant for them.”

“And you gave him them?” asked my uncle.

“Yes, sir,” answered the maid; “as Mrs. James

sent to say she'd only *lent* them to you, sir, and couldn't spare 'em."

How my uncle drew on his polished boots that night I don't know; probably with a very strong expletive.

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Last scene of all. Some few weeks after the above.

At a party. Uncle and friends. Political matters being discussed. King of Bavaria and the disturbances on the *tapis*. An *attaché* belonging to the Foreign Office observed that she was "a plucky woman, but that she was played out." Of whom was he speaking? "Why, of Lola, of course, Lola Montez." Did the *attaché* know her? "Rather! Knew her abroad and travelled with her when she came over here."

"See much of her?" inquired someone. "Oh yes, I used to call on her pretty regularly in Bolton Street. Number five, I think it was"—

(My uncle's lodging!)

"And," continued the gay young spark, "she had great fun. The last day she was here—I had met her the night before at a ball—I called on her next day just before she hurried off—and she amused me (she was a capital *raconteuse*) with a capital story about her borrowing a pair of boot-hooks from some chap who wanted to be awfully fascinating."

Here my uncle looked at his watch, and coming

to the conclusion that it was time to retire,—retired.

“Mrs. James! Lola Montez!!” he said to himself; “what an escape!” And I fancy you’ll agree with me, gentlemen, that my uncle was let off very easily. For the ladies’ verdict I will not ask.”

CHAPTER X

SIC TRANSIT ETONA—ILLNESS—DR. GOODFORD'S
FAREWELL — INTERIM VACATION — LYDIA
THOMPSON—SHAW STEWART—IN WINDSOR
PARK—RENCONTRE—DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE—
FROM ETON TO LONDON—RIVER TRIP—AN
ESCAPE—AMONG THE CAMERONS—THOMP-
SONS IN DEVONSHIRE—HEALTH AND HAPPI-
NESS

I WAS getting along well enough at Eton, as I gather from my "dear diary," in which I jotted down matters at rare intervals up to the end of 1851, when I had in November completed my fifteenth year, and therein I find slang Etonian words, now probably obsolete; and, as a rule, I can obtain as clear a view of how we boys, or some of us, spent a day at Eton in September as a skilled decipherer of hieroglyphics might gather from fragments on *papyri*, assisted by illustrations by contemporary artists. Designs of a somewhat similar character I find in my *Poeta Græci* and other school-books, which, with characteristic regard for literature, illustrated or not, I have carefully preserved. I find that I was continually purchasing light literature, and

had established a kind of lending library: that I dealt with framemakers and bookbinders; that I had written one or two extravaganzas; that I was in fairly constant correspondence with my friend Hamilton Woodgate at Harrow; expressing in my diary, by the way, regret that I had not been at Harrow with him, but consoling myself with the reflection that Eton had some amusements, such as boating and "fives," which Harrow did not possess, and that fagging with us was nothing like so bad as it was with the Harrovians. So I was content. I seem to have been very much in earnest about football, fives, boating, and examination for fifth form. And I suppose that I enjoyed it all very much; but I fancy I enjoyed the holidays and the theatres more, as I find notes about my father writing to inform me that he had "seen Wright and Bedford in *Giralda*, but they were not so good as Compton and Cooke," whom I had seen; and that "Hudson was very good in *Born to Good Luck*." Hudson was a delineator of Irish character, but I only remember him as Tim Moore the Irish tailor, who is mistaken for Tom Moore the poet, in which character, I am quite sure, he did not amuse me very much; but I never saw the Irishman on the stage that did amuse me until Boucicault appeared as Myles-na-Coppaleen.

Illness was the cause of my leaving Eton earlier than I should otherwise have done. Bransby Cooper the surgeon was brought down to Eton by my

father, and though after one operation I was back again for a short while, yet my summer half was broken into, and I had to pay a visit to London and to the eminent surgeon Sir Benjamin Brodie, to whom I was taken by Bransby Cooper. The latter was a rough-and-ready medico of the old school, whose one eye (the other a very bad dummy) did not favourably impress me. Little Sir Benjamin gained my confidence at once, and he, assisted by our own medical man, Mr. Gardner, performed the operation of illustrating me with two cuts, which might have been three, but for Mr. Gardner's detecting an unexplored portion, which at once became the object of Sir Benjamin's attention. This last was the unkindest cut of all. In those days anæsthetics were rarely administered, and I had to "take my punishment" standing. For weeks afterwards I could only crawl on all-fours. I was laid up (never shall I forget the great misery of the first month of it) from about the first week in July until the middle of October. My father was no longer a widower; and as this was his first season as a remarried man, there were dinner parties and music parties and card parties, and in fact the house was gay and festive below, while I was a prisoner in my rooms above, where I read more consecutively than I have ever done before or since, and so laid in quite a stock of interesting knowledge, more or less useful, and the greater part of it highly entertaining. By the way, I may note that it was at

this time I first met with the celebrated ballad (by Thackeray) of "Little Billee," which was set out at length in a book of travel, entitled *Sand and Canvas*, by whom written I forget; but I fancy there was joint-authorship to it, and that it was a very popular work. As visitors to cheer me up, I had cousins and uncles and aunts, a young man or two from Eton on their way home; but Eton to me was now a thing of the past. When I was recovered I went up for one day to bid my tutor good-bye, and to "take leave" of the headmaster, then no longer Dr. Hawtrey, but Dr. Goodford,¹ who presented me with Hallam's *Constitutional History*, handsomely bound in two volumes, as a regulation "leaving book" (charged in the bill, I suppose, as was the "swishing" which, like the book, we also received from the headmaster's hands), and then the little man, in cap and doctor's gown, walked to the window while spasmodically chatting about my future intentions, but delicately avoiding any reference to my *present* intention, which was to place, somewhere on his study table, a ten-pound note, representing the regulation "leaving money" (leaving-on-the-table money), *honorarium*, or whatever it might be termed. Most supremely ridiculous! there was Dr. Goodford with his back to me, but one eye over his shoulder, just to be quite

¹ Dr. Hawtrey became Provost in 1852, and Goodford succeeded him in the headmastership, as he did subsequently in the Provostship in 1862.

certain at what precise moment the deed was done, and his somewhat impatient twitch of the head suggested that if it were going to be done at all it were well it were done quickly, as done it must be; while I, having forgotten the pocket in which the two fivers were stowed away, searched nervously in them all unsuccessfully, until I dived into the side-pocket of my jacket, brought out the envelope containing them, and then stood looking about for a clear spot on the library table where I could place them "on deposit."

To this day I remember as vividly as if it had happened only yesterday my reluctance at parting with a sum, the like of which, *all at once*, in notes, it had never been my good fortune to possess, and in exchange for which I was not conscious of having received any *quid pro quo* or rather *pro quid*. Having a keen sense of humour, a quality not remarkable in the worthy Dr. Goodford, though of course in this instance he could hardly have been expected to enter into my views very heartily, it flashed across me what a comic scene would ensue after I had left the room and the house, if I did *not* leave the money on the table. Or, if I had no right to pocket it, at least *I might hide it*, and then I should have, so to speak, "a run for my money," as the headmaster would be bound to send for me, would have to ask me, nay, coax me into revealing where the amount was secreted; and he couldn't punish me

in any way, as I had taken leave, and was no longer under his rule. There are many things I regret *having* done, but whenever I recall this situation to mind I invariably am quite annoyed with myself for having let slip so unique an opportunity of immortalising the headmaster and myself in the history of Eton. Would there have been no witnesses? Oh, indeed there would. The doctor's butler would have been called in to assist in the search, and doubtless the doctress and daughters, if there were any. But the golden opportunity passed irrevocably; the notes in the envelope were duly placed on the table. Dr. Goodford assisted me in politely bowing myself out of the room, and then no doubt pounced on the envelope, held the flimsies up to the light, and with a sigh of satisfaction placed them in his tin box. Then with such traps and oddments as I had to bring away from my tutor's, and having seen Friday, the old college servant, and paid him a sovereign to take care that my name was duly carved among the "worthies" in upper school, where I suppose it may be seen, in excellent company, to this day, I got into the fly, and waving my hand to a very few boys (whom I probably didn't know), who happened to be lounging about "the wall," I bade a long farewell to "Ye antique spires" and "Henry's holy shade" generally, and drove off to Slough, and thence to London, whence, after a few days' rest, I journeyed down to a private tutor's in Devonshire, who

was to prepare me—I was just nearly seventeen—for matriculation at Trinity College, Cambridge, which I was expected to face in about a year from this date.

Like Arthur Pendennis at Grey Friars, I was, as Thackeray describes him, “in no way remarkable, either as a dunce or as a scholar. He never read to improve himself out of school hours, but, on the contrary, devoured all the novels, plays, and poetry on which he could lay his hands.”

Thackeray's Pendennis at Grey Friars, *i.e.* Charterhouse, brings to my mind vividly Etonians of my own time, “who assumed all the privileges of men long before they quitted that seminary. Many of them, for example, smoked cigars; and some had already begun the practice of inebriation.” I refer the reader to the entire passage, *fabula narratur de Etonâ*. And then Thackeray's adjuration to the fathers and mothers! “Why,” says he, “if you could hear those boys of fourteen, who blush before mothers and sneak off in silence in the presence of their daughters, talking among each other; it would be the woman's turn to blush then.” And so forth. I do not imagine that in my day, or indeed at any time, Eton was a bit worse, as regards moral and religious teaching by word and example, than any other of our public schools. It has turned out (as have the other schools) first-rate men, who might have been just as “first-rate” had they been Wykehamists, Harrovians, or Rugbœans. If its system presented

in my day many social advantages, it had not a few serious disadvantages. Perhaps *on a change tout cela*, and for the better : I hope so. It is a dear old place to boys, and, in another sense, a very dear place to parents. There is a lot of "cant" about Eton, as there is about all ancient institutions. I daresay 'tis just the same with Winchester, Harrow, and Rugby. The boys are supposed to start on a social equality, whatever their rank may be; and fagging, like love, levels all distinctions. "Fagging" in my day was a most decided leveller. Whether it is so nowadays, I cannot say. But after a while the value of a boy's acquaintance comes to be a matter of calculation; deference is paid to the length of his purse, or to the distinction of his title; and the son of a millionaire, well provided with cash, can at his own expense purchase the services of any amount of "toadies" and "tufties" (nay, a "tufty" of limited means can himself become a "toady" in a certain degree) from the age of fourteen up to nineteen, especially where there are worldly-minded parents, whose sole object in sending their sons to a public school is that they may "better themselves" by making friends (no matter on what terms) with present or future dukes, earls, baronets, who may be, as the ambitious parents hope, of the greatest possible use to them (and indirectly to their parents) in after-life. There are little "Wenhams" and "Waggs" in every school, as at Eton, and always will be, I

suppose, while not a tutor who respects himself is without the latest edition of the Peerage on his study table.

As to myself, in bidding good-bye to Eton, I ask, reflectively, how many Etonians whose acquaintance I first made at Eton have I been able to reckon upon in any time of "need" as "friends indeed"? Can I count them on my fingers? I can, certainly; only we will drop one hand altogether, and fold downwards on to the palm two out of the five fingers of the other. Seven from ten, if you please? An elementary sum in subtraction. And of these three I had lost all count for years. I shall come upon two of them in due course; neither of them was up with me at Cambridge, where, during my residence, I saw the last of my Etonian friendships. *Sic transit gloria Etonæ*, and here as a "tag" I may quote a passage from my own diary for September 1850, wherein, comparing Eton with Harrow, I say: "Harrow is still going up. Let it. Whatever it will be, Eton will still be Eton. No change can come over the charm of that Dissyllable word, 'scenes of my joys Hopes and disappointments whate'er thy faults I love thee still' as Mr. C. Kean would say."

The above extract is given *verbatim*. I was thorough enough about Eton *then*, in my fourteenth year. And so I am now, only with a difference.

N.B.—I learnt to grill chicken to perfection, to

make excellent coffee and delicious "buttered eggs" for breakfast.

"Decidedly I have a better memory than I thought I had!" The case in point which forced from me this ejaculation is as follows. I remember in the interim between leaving Eton and going to a private tutor's an event which for me, so theatrically inclined, as may have been gathered from the preceding veracious account of certain performances at "my tutor's," was of the greatest importance; an event to be marked with a white stone in my calendar, or at least in indelible blue ink. What event? Why, no less than my introduction to a charming young actress; an actress who began by making a hit, and finished ere she retired in making a name; an actress who is alive and well as I write (may she so continue, *ad multos annos*!), but not so alive and kicking as she used to be, when she danced the prettiest steps in the world, uttered fairly good lines in so piquant a manner as made them pass for first-class witticisms, and played 'boys' parts" so charmingly, that to "go and see Lydia Thompson," in no matter what the piece might happen to be, was an incentive to the very laziest *habitué* of the theatres. And I remember her first appearance in London! But more—she was the first actress I ever met in private life—the very first actress whom, as Eton boys used to phrase it, "I knew at home." Well, I can't exactly

say "knew," and I never returned to Eton to boast of my acquaintance; or, if the event was not in the Easter vacation of my last year at Eton, and if I did return there, I am sure that no mention of her ever passed my lips. But I fancy the introduction must have taken place in the winter, when she was playing the Christmas piece, and not in the Easter time, when she would have finished her engagement. Be that as it may—and no Empire will fall, no Government collapse, by reason of my failure of correctness in dates—I remember big, burly, jovial, red-faced Michael Shaw Stewart, who had but recently obtained his commission in the Guards, and was soon to go out to the Crimea, asking me to come with him and call upon "Little Lydia," who was at that very time performing as "Little Silverhair" in the pantomime of *Harlequin and the Three Bears, or Little Silverhair and the Fairies*, at the Haymarket Theatre.

Joyously I accepted the invitation, profoundly reverencing Michael Shaw Stewart, who was about two years my senior, and considering myself "at my time of life" (I was just past sixteen) as highly privileged.

How well I remember the room! How well I remember Shaw Stewart doing all the talking to the aunt or mother, and how well I remember her, the goddess of my idolatry (*pour le moment*), in child's skirts!

Seated on a highish chair (not a nursery one), with her legs tucked up, and utterly ignoring the

second visitor, myself, who appeared as "Charles his friend," a person "of no importance," she attended only to Shaw Stewart, who did most of the talking except when Lydia, or her guardian, joined in.

That was my first approach to the mysterious barrier that divides the "unseen" behind the scenes from the ordinary world of "friends in front." I looked; I admired; open-mouthed I wondered. Probably I said nothing at all; blissful fatuity crushed me. "I never told my love, but like a worm," etc.—that is, I never mentioned the fact to a living soul (I wonder why?), but as I write this I receive an answer to an inquiry from the clever little sprightly lady herself which perfectly corroborates my recollection of this "small and early" event.

"Yes," writes Mrs. Henderson, *née* Lydia Thompson, "the correct date of my *first* appearance was December 26, 1853, at the Haymarket Theatre, as 'Little Silverhair' in the pantomime of *Harlequin and the Three Bears, or Little Silverhair and the Fairies*. It was the first pantomime ever played at the Haymarket. *Entre nous* I was then just upon fourteen years old, my birthday falling in February." Then Mrs. Henderson further corroborates my recollection, as to where she resided with some old friend of her mother's (so it was not her mother or aunt by whom we were received); and then she adds, as to Michael Shaw Stewart, "I remember the name quite well, but I am ashamed to say I do not remember the

juvenile visitor (*me*), and I trust he will forgive me for this lapse of memory." Isn't that delightful! But *I* shall never forget her as Little Silverhair. Ah, those first impressions! Well, well, the years roll on, and 'tis I who am the "Silverhair," not "little" but "much Silverhair" (with plenty of fairies about, of the second generation), and I trust as long as I have a part to play I may perform it creditably until the final "curtain." . . . And then the criticism.¹ The stage-bias was always with me, it is evident. *Passons.*

Although Queen Victoria so frequently stayed at Windsor, I do not remember ever having seen her driving through Eton, and only once did I catch sight of Her Majesty's carriage with outriders in the Long Walk. It was here quite close to the gates that poor "Hippy Damer," whose career (after leaving Eton for the Guards) about town was the theme of much amusing gossip, is said to have hailed the Royal carriage with a convivial and genial "How are you? How are you?" and to have said, as he advanced towards the carriage in which Her Majesty was seated, "How are you? I r'member your face, but can't put a name to it." The story is well known, "extant," and, as are so many about "Hippy

¹ And as I write, it is just a little before Christmas, Silverhair, without the little bears and the fairies, actually arrives. The fairy godmothers have been very good to her. She is as bright and as lively as ever, and her daughter, Miss Tilbury, has already made her mark as a *comédienne*.

Damer" and "Duffer Bruce," of course "written in *very choice*" English, as are most of the simple nursery tales about these two ingenuous youths.

One visitor to Eton whom I shall never forget "as long as memory holds her seat in this distracted frame" is the old Duke of Cambridge (father of the present Duke, who is hale and hearty at eighty-four, and doing plenty of work), a very grand old man to look at, with a powerfully sonorous voice, which he employed when in Eton College chapel to some purpose. Service was proceeding quietly enough, from "the wicked man" to the first exhortation to pray, when in response to the college chaplain's (or "conduit's") melodiously intoned,

"Let us pray!"

there came from the Provost's corner in the stalls, occupied as the place of honour by the distinguished visitor, a loud voice, that replied, as spokesman for himself and everybody present, in the heartiest possible tone—

"Yes, by all means!"

How startled were all the boys! How they all faced round, and, regardless of the sanctity of the chapel, nudged each other, asking, "Who's that?" and receiving for answer, "That's the Duke of Cambridge." Evidently no one except a royal duke could dare to raise his voice above that of the clergyman conducting the service. The choir was not in it with

the Duke, or the Duke not in it with the choir, and "the sound of his grand Amen" was not to be dominated even by the organ. I have heard and read of "hearty services," but no part in any such service could be rendered with greater heartiness than was that for which His Royal Highness cast himself in the programme of Eton College chapel,—“for that occasion only,” as far as my recollection of it goes.

One of the freshest of my Eton recollections is of a delightful river trip on the first day of midsummer or an Easter—a late Easter—vacation. I cannot exactly fix it, but I fancy it must have been very near the time of my farewell. Jack Paynter, whose father, the then well-known police magistrate, had a house at Richmond overlooking the Thames, with, I think, Sparkes, "our friend," and another lad of the name of Pearson, like the three sailors of Bristol City "took a boat," and on the last day of school time started in the early morning to go "home for the holidays." Spring or summer, it was glorious weather; that is what I remember, perfectly. We breakfasted at Ankerwick, being there hospitably entertained by "the Priors," who were the tenants of that delightfully situated promontory or island (I forget which it is), and then paddled or floated without effort on a strong tide from lock to lock, amazingly enjoying the *dolce far niente* of the trip, lazying all the way, with occa-

sional refreshment, until we reached our destination. At his father's house Jack Paynter put us up for the night. We boys were its only occupants; a sympathetic butler watched over us. We had a grand repast in the freest and easiest style; and afterwards, with pipes or cigars, we "finished our wine" while playing several games in the billiard-room. It was late before we went to bed, but most considerately Jack Paynter had told the benignant butler "not to sit up for us" as "we" would see that everything was all right. Oh fortunate disobedience of the butler!

The next morning, in the dining-room, Jack Paynter, who had the coolest manner and the pleasantest purr of a laugh, observed casually—

"I say, you chaps, who turned out the gas in the billiard-room last night?"

I thought *I* did; Sparkes was pretty sure *he* did; Pearson was almost certain that he remembered having at all events turned off *one* of the lights.

"Well," said Jack Paynter honestly, "I'd have sworn I saw to them all before I left the room, because I knew the gov'nor is *awfully* particular about it."

"Didn't you?" we asked.

"I don't know how it was," went on Jack Paynter in his quiet, smiling manner, "but old Dobson—that's our butler, you know—he somehow thought we *mightn't* have turned it off, and so he got up early

before any of the maids were about, and I'm doosid glad to say—he's a knowing old bird is Dobson—he went into the room *without a candle*."

"Well?" we were breathless.

"Well," continued Jack, his smile increasing as if gradually letting out the very cream of the joke—"well—he was nearly knocked down."

"Knocked down!" we exclaimed.

"Yes," Jack proceeded very leisurely, while helping himself to coffee,—“yes—nearly knocked down—the billiard-room was choke-full of gas, and if he had gone in with a candle we should have been all blown to kingdom come."

"By Jove!!!" This was unanimous.

After a pause Sparkes said, "My! how lucky! I say! suppose one of us had gone in with a light!!"

"If the room were full of gas," I observed, "it's rather lucky *Sparkes* didn't go near it, eh?"

Evidently we had all been in such a condition as proverbially calls for the interference of a special beneficent Providence.

After such an escape of gas it is pleasant to recount that all three heroes came unscathed through the Crimean War, but only very occasionally within the next few years did this light-hearted and, for the occasion, light-headed *trio* meet with the present narrator. We were the greatest friends; we are so now, though I am pretty sure that only two

of this party are alive to tell the tale. And I only hope the other one will corroborate me.

I will pass over lightly the pleasant time I spent at Cameron's in Somersetshire, where I began to prepare for going up to "Trinity College, Cambridge," by learning how to drive a dogcart. Mr. Cameron was one of the old high-and-dry school of Anglican clergy. He was a good shot; and more of a squarson than a parson. He was a connection of our family, having married a cousin of my father's, Miss Louisa Sapte. Mrs. Henry Cameron, the novelist, is his daughter-in-law. There were two pupils besides myself, both rather rackety chaps, but very good companions. To these two my cart and horse were a source of considerable pleasure—and pain—while I was perfecting myself in the inexpensive acquisition of the art of driving. The smashes and spills with which I commenced, the damages to life and limb that my fellow-pupils sustained, were all practical illustrations of the American minister's dictum, now grown into a world-wide proverb, that "he who never makes a mistake, never makes anything." What a favourite with the eccentric Jack Mitton I should have been at that time! Fortunately, I knew nothing of him and his wild driving, or perhaps I might have been tempted to emulate some 'of his least mad performances. One thing is certain, that if I found one adage true in respect

to my conduct at this time, there was another, namely, that "who breaks, pays," I proved to demonstration in my case absolutely false. I broke; my father (bless him!) paid. I may here observe, *parenthetically*, and the adverb is not introduced *à propos* of my father for the sake of a pun (I hold up my left hand in Johnsonian horror at the notion! *Ecce!*—"Satan rebuking sin!"), that my father was somewhat indulgent in money matters where his son was concerned. But in those old prosperous days—well—there was only one of the family, that is my Uncle George, who had the true trading instincts of the "universal provider." He was lavish, but lucky.

From Cousin Cameron's in Somersetshire I was forwarded to the Rev. Mr. Thompson's at Blackborough in Devonshire. Mr. Thompson, whose patron had, I think, been Lord Eglinton, was in possession of the living of Blackborough, and occupied a large white mansion, built in the Italian style at the top of a steep hill, and commanding a magnificent view of the country. Mr. Thompson was a delightful man and an excellent tutor, one of the very few masters I remember who contrived to interest his pupil in the work he had in hand. He could make the study of Euclid a pastime, and the working out of logarithms a recreation. Then the society of the place was such as—

"*Emollit mores nec sinit esse ferus.*"

His sister-in-law, Miss Voules,—a cousin, I think, of

the late witty, most amusing raconteur and ready writer, James Payn, of whose sayings and doings, both before and after his going up to Cambridge, many legends existed at Blackborough,—was a lady possessing considerable accomplishments, a keen appreciation of humour, and her laughter was infectious. What fun it all was! and what fun a young clergyman, the Rev. Stafford Northcote, with fair, curly hair, blue eyes (or blue spectacles, I forget which), could be whenever he visited the house, as he frequently did. Mr. Thompson's musical efforts were, if I remember, confined to performances on the cornet-à-piston or key bugle, with whose notes he would not only wake the echoes round about, which was a matter of no particular importance to anybody, but would arouse us from sleep at about six in the morning. As the hunting song has it—

“The sound of his horn woke me from my bed,”

my tutor appearing in his favourite character of “John Peel.” Then there were picnics, and rides, and drives, and everything that could make country life pleasant; so it was no wonder that, not only then, but at a rather later time, while still at Cambridge, when I recalled these days, the life of an English clergyman in a pretty country parish, with “cheerful surroundings,” should have represented itself to me as an ideal existence. Perhaps, *cherchez la femme* may be applied here; and, *entre nous*, I am somewhat of that opinion myself. A Miss Fotheringay

to a youthful Arthur Pendennis? Perhaps. *Passons*. But, if this were the case, depend upon it the vision of beauty that fascinated me at seventeen must by then have been able to assert her superiority over me by at least five years. The odds were in *her* favour, as twenty-two to seventeen. I do not say it *was* so; but I think it must have been so, either at this time, or, when once again, a year or so later, I visited these parts and both renewed and extended my acquaintance. However, the scene changed, and while it is being shifted, let us take a look round at some "views of London" that I still have retained on the retina of my mind's eye.

CHAPTER XI

IN AND ABOUT TOWN—LAURA—THACKERAY—
CORA PEARL—AGNES WILLOUGHBY—A LONG
DRIVE—OUR SAD EXPERIENCE—FELBRIGG—
TAGLIONI—CARLOTTA GRISI—EVANS'S—SER-
GEANT BALLANTINE—JUDGE AND JURY—
FOLEY ROOMS—OTHER HAUNTS—BIRTHDAY
—UP TO TRINITY—MY FIRST PLAY IN PUBLIC
—THE FITZGERALDS—MERRY MOMENTS

WHAT with my holidays when at Eton and during my private tuition, spent, as they were, principally in London, in company with young men about town for companions all considerably older than myself, my experience as to "what was going on" was certainly above the average of that possessed ordinarily by youths of my age. I had a kind of admiration for "Foker" as he was when he visited Pendennis at Fair Oaks, and inclined to such nocturnal metropolitan amusements as were the delight of a certain Jack Johnson and his friends in the days of *The Adventures of Mr. Ledbury*, as at that period racily recounted by Albert Smith. Certainly I was not one of those "home-keeping youths who have ever homely wits." But great

and many as are the superficial changes, "town life" and *la vie de Bohême* remain, essentially, the same. I say advisedly "essentially" as, with a change of name and the adoption of various cunning devices calculated to render the act of no effect as far as concerns those who can pay for breaking through its provisions, the night life of London in the twentieth century is very much the same as it was in the middle of the nineteenth century, when it had very considerably altered from what, as we see pictured and described in *Tom and Jerry*, it was at its commencement.

As a "boy about town" I remember several notorious Hetairæ being pointed out to me as they rode in spanking style in the Row, were driven in open landaus, or charioteered themselves about Hyde Park in the season. The most memorable of these was "Laura Bell," whose name, strange to say, Thackeray chose for his virtuous, quiet, and rather insipid heroine in *Pendennis*. Clearly do I call to mind Laura Bell's pretty, doll-like face, her big eyes, not ignorant of an artistic touch that added a lustre to their natural brilliancy, and her quick vivacious glances as she sat in an open phaeton, vivaciously talking with a variety of men, all "swells" of the period of course, at the corner of the drive near the Achilles statue, while her smart little "tiger" stood at the horses' heads. What strange stories I used to hear of her recklessness, her prodigality, her

luxury, and her cleverness! Was not her *liaison* with the chief of the Nepaulese princes, Jung Bahadoor, who alone was a temporary fortune to her, the theme of "songs of the period" such as were sung by one Sharpe, after midnight, at Evans's, when all the fresh-voiced boy-choristers had retired to bed, and when, indeed, it would have been better had some of us, including the present honest chronicler, been tucked up ere we commenced injuring our health without perceptibly benefiting our morals? Her name cropping up in the course of conversation many years after, I was reminded that she had married a Mr. Thistlethwayte, and was further informed that this "prodigal daughter" had become an earnest and fervent preacher, that at her tea-table it was her "custom" frequently "of an afternoon" to welcome several eminent, staid, and learned individuals, receiving with especial favour a certain great orator and statesman, who could, when he saw fit, be "all things to all men," and most things to most women, if only they were his rapt admirers. How many wonderfully gifted personages have we not, all of us, known who could pardon everything in those that worshipped much.

After this time followed "Cora Pearl," and later "Agnes Willoughby," afterwards Mrs. Wyndham, married to the eccentric heir to large estates, including Felbrigg Hall, Norfolk, who ended by driving the Norwich coach and taking the regulation "tips" from the passengers. I sat behind him

on one occasion during a short run about Norfolk (somewhere in the 'sixties of last century, I fancy) when going to Felixstowe. Wyndham spoke a Norfolk dialect, intelligible only to the guard, ostlers, and natives with whom he might enter into conversation. Having been told that this was *the* Wyndham that had been at Eton (I did not in the least remember him, so perhaps he was my junior), I gradually led up to topics familiar to both of us, when, to my surprise, he at once entirely dropped the character of a countrified coachman and talked about "old times" and many persons known as boys to both of us.

"Do you remember a good-looking chap called Tom Wirlston?" he asked. I purposely change the name.

"Yes, I did."

"He went up to Cambridge, didn't he?" inquired Wyndham.

"That's the man," I returned. "We were very good friends then, and he became a member of the A.D.C., our acting club"—Wyndham nodded—"but I only remember him playing one part, and we lost sight of each other in our last year when we were both reading."

"Ah, well," said Wyndham, "he was a very handsome fellow—fine grown man—I don't know if you'd like to see him now."

"Yes, I should, very much. Is he anywhere within range?" I asked.

Wyndham indicated with his whip a small park in the near distance, and then said—

“If you like to get down now and walk across that field, you’ll come right on to the lodge. I’ve got to bait for a few minutes, then pull up this long hill and gently down on t’ other side, so I can give you a good half-hour. You’ll find our old friend sadly changed, I fear; but remember me to him, and say, when I can get a day off I’ll call round.”

So down we got, I and my travelling companion.

True enough there was our old friend, delighted to see us, but such a wreck of a man in so few years! If I am correct in my dates, this visit was well on in the ‘sixties, and we had not met since we were quite lads together at Trinity. We—Fred. Wilson was my companion—wished him well most heartily, and he was sufficiently collected, during the very few minutes we stayed with him, to refer to the past, and to tell us of the numerous improvements he intended to make on his estates when he was “about again.”

Poor fellow! he never was “about again,” as not long after this he died.

We were both silent as we walked out. Presently I uttered what was uppermost in my mind as I asked Frederick Wilson, “After the butler had pointed out this short cut to us, you stopped to talk to him. What did he tell you?”

Fred. Wilson shook his head gravely as he replied—

"You saw that man who was in his bedroom?"

"Yes, busy about the medicines and things; his valet, wasn't it?"

"No,—*his keeper.*"

"Good Heaven!"

Wilson went on: "There was another within call just on the other side of the door."

"But why did they let us see him?"

"He had heard the bell; it was his one quiet moment; our names were read to him from the card you sent up, and he seemed so suddenly delighted, so momentarily changed, that they felt our visit might be productive of good. But his man whispered to me," continued Fred. Wilson, "as we went out, that the lull was ending, and that in another second he would be raving!"

We found the coach, and gave Wyndham the information.

"He's booked," said Wyndham, with a big sigh, and it was a long time before we tried to start a subject of conversation. Then—after a while—having shown himself a sympathising, kind, and tender-hearted friend, and having "played the gentleman"—that is, as I believe, "been himself" in "his original part"—for so long, he suddenly threw care and refinement to the winds, exchanged some coarse chaff with the passers-by, laughed with the guard, used the most outlandish expressions, whipped up his team, and took us up to the inn in fine style,

when, after having thrown the reins to an ostler and descended from his driving-seat, he with a true coachman-like touch of the hat and in broad county-tongued dialect, said, "Good-day, sir," and accepted his two crowns as a tip from us; and when we subsequently encountered him among his boon companions at the inn he did not bestow upon us any further recognition nor appear to be anything else but a rough, jolly sort of loud-voiced, easy-drinking, country driver of the Norfolk coach.

This Norfolk-Wyndham episode has carried me far ahead, yet as it is the interval between Eton and the University, an *intermezzo* concerning personages connected with both places being permissible, I will return for a while to town and collect some fugitive memories.

I remember elegant Carlotta Grisi the dancer as a dazzling equestrienne in the Row, but I never saw her on the stage, as she danced at Her Majesty's, while, as I have already said, my father was a staunch Covent Gardenite. And so I only heard of Marie Taglioni and the other celebrated ballerini who executed the far-famed *pas de quatre*. What I knew of this dance I learnt only from the imitations given in a Princess's pantomime of a somewhat later date by Flexmon, the clown and ballet-master. But though Fanny Elssler, Perrot, Taglioni, Carlotta Grisi were only names to me (as a boy, I remember I was as utterly astonished at Carlotta Grisi's being able to

ride, and actually cantering about in the Row, just as any pretty lady might have done, one of my own cousins, for example, and with nice people, too, as was innocent Mr. Pickwick when Sergeant Buzfuz wished Sergeant Snubbin "a good morning"), yet I have—*moi qui parle*—I have had a long conversation with Taglioni—but it was when she was Madame La Marquise, or La Marchesa, of something or other, French or Italian—I forget which, and when introduced to her at the house of Mr. Frederick Lablache, son of the Great and Big Lablache, I found myself sitting on a sofa next to a funny little shrivelled-up but most vivacious old lady, who was quite ready and willing to entertain me with the story of her life. Yes, I met Taglioni when, indeed, "her dancing days were over." But she was instructing pupils; so I presume the Marquisate, or whatever the title might have been, was not worth its weight in gold.

My experiences of the "Fast Life" of London began and ended early. The great difference between "then" and "now," that is, as far as I can ascertain anything concerning the present time "from information received," seems to me to be in the hours kept. The "Early Closing Act" of 1872, which not only put an end to places of so-called "entertainment" in the Metropolis as were of no sort of benefit to anyone save the proprietors and their employes, but also closed the doors of

"Evans's Supper Rooms," where admirably performed old English glees, and good songs by professional choristers, provided a concert lasting from nine until past one, which was a delight to those who, after dining at their club or *en garçon* at "The Piazza Coffee-House," "The Cock Tavern," "Simpson's" in the Strand, or elsewhere within easy distance of Covent Garden, preferred spending an evening after the fashion of King Cole, with their tobacco, their glass, and a Welsh rarebit to finish with, to patronising any theatrical or other "show" that attracted so many others. Purged of the so-called "comic songs," of the propriety of which there could never for one instant have arisen any question, so gross were they and so devoid even of such wit as Lord Rochester's poems may be allowed to possess, Evans's, under Paddy Green, before the fatal innovation of admitting ladies to the half dozen private boxes in the new building, was quite a haven of rest, "far from the madding crowd" that thronged the supper-rooms and saloons, to those who dearly loved old English glees and madrigals, performed, as were done the chops, steaks, and potatoes, to perfection. Here, occasionally, came Thackeray, though more often he patronised the Cider Cellars, or remained in the smoking-room of the Garrick close at hand; here came, now and again, Charles Dickens; and on a Wednesday night a majority of the *Punch* staff, with Mark Lemon, would gather about the table in the corner, just to

the right of the platform, on which the piano stood. I am now describing the old room as I first knew it during my Eton holidays and during the earlier part of my Cambridge days. In spite of the multiplication of clubs, of theatres, of supper-places, restaurants, and hotels, I maintain that a revival of Evans's, just as it was in the old days, exceptionally licensed, to remain open until 1.30 a.m., "ladies not admitted" on any pretext whatever, an entertainment being given under responsible management, and the whole affair being strictly and properly conducted on high-class lines as to musical entertainment, and refreshments at moderate charges, including such suppers as could be provided at a "grill," I say I maintain that such a "revival of the fittest" would be, not only a great success as a place of resort, but a still greater success as a commercial speculation. The *sine qua non* is a genial, courtly, clever man of the world, a man who would be "a host in himself," present every evening to welcome the visitors and to bid them, individually, welcome, displaying a well-simulated interest in their particular and immediate wants and requirements. London life would not be worse for the revival of the palmy days of "Evans's," without the most objectionable element of the so-called "comic song." One constant figure about town at Evans's, and at other resorts of a less exclusive character, was Sergeant Ballantine, who, with a "pewter" in his hand, his hat well forward over his forehead, and his legs stretched

out wide apart, would sit, apparently absorbed in the glees, occasionally chatting with Paddy Green, but rarely joining the jovial party that gathered round the small corner table, carefully reserved for Mark Lemon, Shirley Brooks, "Pony" Mayhew, Thackeray, Sir Charles Taylor, Andrew Arcedeckne, who with, occasionally, John Leech, Albert Smith, the Broughs, Buckstone, and several other notables, literary and dramatic, would contrive to look in here, four evenings out of six, and to be welcomed by the amiable snuff-taking Paddy, as among his "Dear Boys, Dear Boys." There was a *siffleur*, one Herr von Jöel, "retained on the establishment on account of his long services" (Heaven knows what they were!), who, in a shabby alpaca coat, very dingy shirt collar and wristbands, used to hand round cigars in a tumbler, and held himself always in readiness to take a turn on the stage with his imitation of birds, which he had brought to considerable perfection.

The Coal Hole and the Cider Cellars I have mentioned. At the former sat Judge Nicholson and his court, trying cases quite "unfit for publication," in which he was assisted by one Brooks, "The Protean Witness," and the solemn way in which the judge would stop a case, in order to address the jury (*i.e.* the visitors who had paid so much a head as entrance fee), and "direct" them "to give their orders, as the waiter was in the room," was something not easily forgotten.

Wishing you many happy returns of the day. FEB. 26. 1896. W. H. H. MAY.



HAPPY THOUGHTS FOR A
BIRTHDAY PARTY.
WHY DON'T YOU INVITE THEM ALL
TO TEA?
WHO?
THE TEAPOTS

In those days too there was a considerable amount of public, and quasi-public, dancing going on, not only at such places as "The Hanover Square Rooms" and at the rooms in St. James's Street (the name escapes me), where such fashionable reunions as "The Caledonian Ball" and similar "dances" were held on certain comparatively state occasions, but there was dancing at Vauxhall, at Cremorne, at the Surrey Gardens, at the Princess's Rooms, and so forth. And in places of less *ton* were given "ballet balls" and dances, while teachers of dancing, as was Mrs. Selby in Soho, would give dances to which their pupils, principally female, could bring their friends at so much a head, refreshments and supper included. These were semi-respectable and of mixed class; and many quite respectable, entirely the middle-class of fairly well-to-do shop girls and so forth, perhaps answering in a certain way to what at one time were the *grisettes* of Paris. Nowadays there are no *grisettes*, though *la vie de Bohème* of *Mürger* will always be found in all great cities where art attracts the youthful student.

Of all quietly superior dancing places Willis's (not "Willis's Rooms," which was quite another affair), better known as "Frere's," near Langham Church, and, as I fancy, in the street just at the back of Foley Street (known also as the "Foley Rooms"), was the best, and to the *habitués* as to the novice the most amusing and most attractive.

"Folly Rooms" instead of "Foley" would have been the more appropriate title. The dances were held twice a week, and it wasn't everybody who could get an invitation. Oh, dear, no! not even if as a gentleman you should pay five-and-sixpence for a ticket and three-and-sixpence for the lady or several three-and-sixpences for the lady and her lady friends. How unbending they were, these ladies, in the height of fashion too, and such aristocratic names, which indeed not a few of their cavaliers, elderly or youthful, bore by right. And how the time flew by and the dances, always directed by Mr. Frere, a very quiet and most highly respectable personage, neither obtrusive nor obsequious, but quite ready to deal summarily and in a most tactful manner with any lady of title whose head was unaccustomed to the peculiar vintage of champagne as supplied on these occasions! The Army and the Bar were sufficiently represented, and in vacation times came a sprinkling from the universities, though for the most part the undergrads and the "two year old" men of that period cared less for the gay and giddy waltz, the very much overdone polka, and the wild galop (how wild! mad!), than for a quiet turn of "the Fancy" at "Bob Crofts" in the Haymarket, or at "Nat Langham's" or "Professor Harrison's," at all of which places the coming prize-fights were discussed, bets were made, and dogs were backed to kill so many rats in so many

minutes. Of gambling places I rarely heard. Cröckford's was a thing of the past, and only one place do I remember as being considered in an inferior way its successor ; and I am not sure if the rooms where I remember a fast young friend of mine losing a heap of money did not belong to the *Oriental Club* in that block of buildings in Waterloo Place which was subsequently the German Reeds' delightful *Gallery of Illustration*. The Oriental and the Raleigh Clubs were here, I fancy, at one time, but I am by no means sure.

Yes, I saw a great deal of this sort of London life before I went up to Cambridge, and in a very short space of time, but I delighted to get away to the country, and revelled in preparing for matriculation *chez* Mr. Thompson of Blackborough, Collumpton, Devonshire ; and when compelled to be in London I did not care to upset the arrangements at home, where important changes had taken place, and so stopped about with friends in the country, occasionally taking a spell during vacation at Long's or Limmer's, which latter was then a house of call for sportsmen, where everything was rough and ready, except the payments, with its dark oak seats and tables, its big old-fashioned fireplace, and its sanded floor.

But I find I am in advance by a couple of terms of my university career. So now the next step is up to Trinity College, Cambridge, when I was just seventeen and three quarters, *i.e.* in

October 1854, looking forward to my eighteenth birthday, the 29th of the following month. That is a date I can fix exactly.

And how delightful it was! What a sense of freedom! But now a boy from Eton, now a "freshman" like Pendennis, Foker, and my other Thackerayan heroes. There was something in the name of my tutor that was a good omen; he was the Rev. "Mr. Thacker!" Two-thirds of Thackeray in name; but if I expected from this some resemblance to the great novelist, I was doomed to complete disappointment. Except in kindness of manner, he was as unlike W. M. T. as possible.

I went through my "matriculation" (a mere farce of examination, as I had already paid my fees, signed my name, and become to all intents and purposes a "Trinity man"), and then came the question of rooms "in college or out of college?"

The love of freedom I had acquired since quitting Eton was strong within me. To be "*in college*" was to be all among tutors, masters, governors! "My soul should not be fettered!" nor my body, any more than I could help. And so "*Vive la liberté!*" this to myself as I replied sedately, "Sir, I think a friend of mine has bespoken rooms for me."

This was a statement not entirely void of foundation. I *had* seen an Eton friend who had advised me to live out of college; and I had seen another Etonian who informed me of capital rooms over

a grocer's shop in Trinity Street, just opposite Trinity Gate.

"Your friend's name," inquired my tutor.

I was a bit nervous lest on hearing it Mr. Thacker should pull a long face, shake his head, and frowningly negative the proposition.

"His name, sir, is—ahem—Norman."

Now just at that minute, always having an unfortunate trick of memory when anything dramatic was concerned, it occurred to me that this sounded uncommonly as if I had intended commencing a parody on the celebrated declamatory speech,

"My name is—Norval,"

and had I clearly seen that to continue the lines would have ingratiated me with the Rev. Mr. Thacker, senior tutor and Fellow of Trinity, I believe I should have continued the recitation, adapting it to the existing circumstances.

However, I was not called upon for this extra contribution to my matriculation, as Mr. Thacker, after referring to a book, observed that Mr. Norman was going "to keep" (that was the university phrase) at Moore's, which as I had rightly said was just opposite Trinity.

"Let me know how you get on," said my tutor, bowing me out. "I will send for you to-morrow, and decide as to the lectures which you will attend."

So I descended the narrow stone staircase, went to the porter's, sent for my luggage, and within an

hour was installed in my "freshman's rooms"—"bachelor's quarters," only, in the university sense I was not a "bachelor"—with Henry John Norman, of the eminent banking firm, below, and for a neighbour upstairs, Glyn Vivian, both Etonians and both my seniors at college by quite a couple of terms. "So I came into their life!" And my landlord, sharp-eyed, sprightly, bald-headed, and energetic in his groceries was John or Henry Voce Moore, who in 1899 was elected Lord Mayor of London. His health! Had I but known the dignity in store for him I might in cap and gown (not bells) have addressed him in prophetic spirit, and said in the Witching-Macbethian style,

"Voce Moore thou art! and shall be much Moore hereafter! Hail, Moore the Mayor! Elected *unâ Voce!*"

But it is rather late to think of this now. The Worshipful ex-Mayor and I cannot return to old Cambridge days, and I do not suppose that either of us would wish to do so even if we could. At all events, I don't, not to any days except one exception, but that is a secret, not *de Polichinelle* but *entre moi et moi même*. "Voce Moore" is a peculiar name, and I gather from an answer given me by Sir William Jameson Soulsby, the Lord Mayor's private secretary, that Sir John Voce Moore and my good landlord at Cambridge are identical.

With what a marvellous equipment of classics

did an ordinary Etonian of my day go up to the university, especially the youth who having benefited, temporarily, by the laborious skill of "eminent translators." was, in one respect, like the ox of Scripture that "knoweth his master's 'crib'!" As to mathematics, to paraphrase the well-known saying concerning an eminent scholar, to the effect that "what he didn't know was not worth knowing," I may apply it to myself with just one alteration, and that is of "didn't" into "did," and making the "*did*" emphatic. In this respect I was neither better nor worse than the "vast majority" who came up from Eton, and I find my personal experience corroborated by that of such of my *æquales* as have written on the subject, and by that of others somewhat anterior to me. However "ignorance is bliss," and we were certainly uncommonly happy. As for me, I have been able to support existence without the "props" thoughtfully provided by Euclid.

I was soon in the regular course of chapels, lectures, and halls. There were then two "chapels" a day, the first early (whether seven or eight, I forget), and the other at six p.m. Dinner in hall was at that time at what I considered the curious hour of four; a time that, when I came to devote myself to "read" (being thereto compelled in order to pass examinations either in college or subsequently for Little-Go and then for Degrees) I found uncommonly well chosen and decidedly convenient.

To breakfast at eight, "grind" from nine till one, take some very light refreshment, nothing more solid than soup, and then to go out for exercise, walking or riding, from 1.30 to 3.30, is a preparation that will make anyone perfectly ready for a good square meal at four; and, by six o'clock, after cigar, or pipe, and coffee, he will be fit as a fiddle to "grind" again from six until 9.30, when something consoling to drink, something light and digestible to eat, a modicum of tobacco while chatting or playing a game of *écarté* with a chum, will finish the working day; after which, to bed at eleven. Continue like this through life—ahem!—and virtue will be rewarded by good health and a perfect capacity for enjoying everything.

"Good health" failed me within a very short time from my first appearance at Trinity, the consequence being that I found myself a prisoner in my rooms, devoting my time to developing my talents in a department of literature which I had commenced at Eton with the farce I had written for performance in "pupil-room."¹ To this I devoted all my time. My name being on the sick-list, dropped out of the

¹ Of this farce I have already given the *cast* as originally played at my tutor's at Eton. Here is the bill as it was subsequently performed "under the immediate patronage" of my father, who was staying at the time at my Uncle George's house at Worthing. How the novelty was received, or how it was played I never knew. I was "innocent of the knowledge" until after the event, but whether the audience did "applaud the deed" or not no one informed me, and at that time I

FIRST PUBLIC PERFORMANCE 255

lecture list, and I was left in peace where tutors ceased from troubling. During this time, I being "agrotat," was provided with dinner from "the had no idea that this sort of thing "got into the papers." Blissful state! Here is the "bill of the play":—

THEATRE ROYAL, WORTHING.

*Licensed according to Act of Parliament to Mr. Edward Snewin,
Builder, Market Street.*

Sole Lessee . . . MR. CHARLES PLUNKETT.

By Desire

And under the immediate Patronage of

F. BURNAND, ESQ.,

On which occasion that gentleman has kindly favoured Mr. PLUNKETT with an entirely New Farce (never acted), entitled

GUY FAWKES DAY.

On FRIDAY EVENING, September 8th,

When will be performed Sheridan's beautiful Comedy,

THE RIVALS.

Then follows the cast with "Mr. CHARLES PLUNKETT (first time), Sir Anthony Absolute," and "Mrs. CHARLES PLUNKETT as Lydia Languish."

Dance	Mr. J. P. WESTON.
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A Comic Song	Mr. G. H. BRANDON.
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To conclude with the New Farce, entitled

GUY FAWKES DAY.

Mr. Soapeton	Mr. SYMONDSON.
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Mr. Tickleton (his cousin)	Mr. J. PARRY.
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Cracks (a swell-mobsman)	Mr. KINGSTON.
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Buttons (a page)	Mr. G. H. BRANDON.
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John (a footman)	Mr. J. P. WESTON.
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A Detective	Mr. BUTLER.
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Mrs. Soapeton	Miss KATE THOMAS.
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kitchens," and so it came about that, during my first term, I only attended in "hall"—it wasn't very "merry in hall," where very few "beards wagged"—just at its commencement and at its finish. I "kept" my term, as I found out afterwards, greatly to my satisfaction, with remarkable ease and comfort. But these "little dinners," *chez moi*, involved me in extra hospitality, for which it was necessary to obtain dishes from Lichfield's, who was the *restaurateur* of that period. Lichfield, a jovial old soul, kept a kind of restaurant, not three minutes' walk from our door:

PRICES OF ADMISSION.—Lower Boxes, 3s. ; Upper Boxes, 2s. ; Upper Private Boxes, 2s. 6d. Second Price to Dress Boxes, 2s. ; Upper do., 1s. 6d. ; Upper Private do., 2s. ; Pit, 1s. ; Gallery, 6d. No half-price to Pit or Gallery.

The Doors will be opened at Seven o'clock. Curtain to rise at Half-past Seven.

Tickets to be obtained at Miss Carter's Library, or at Mr. Paine's Printing Offices, Chapel Road. The Box Plan may be seen and places secured at the Theatre from Eleven till Two.

Leader of the Band	Mr. HEWETT.
Scenic Artist	Mr. WALL.
Acting and Stage Manager . .	Mr. JOHN PARRY.

PAINE, PRINTER, WORTHING.

"There is no date to that, is there, sir?" inquired a juror in the Pickwick trial. And with the learned Sergeant Buzfuz, I reply, "There is no date, gentlemen." I fancy it must have been about 1852 or 1853, as I should say we boys had performed the piece (which had been printed at Windsor) in my tutor's (Cooke's) pupil-room in 1852, or it may have been in the early part of 1853. Anyway, this, my first piece, was in print and acted by professionals when I was about fifteen years old.

it was most convenient for hunting men who arrived too late for hall, and for most who preferred dining at a later hour than that of their college, whichever it might be. Some cheerful spirits preferred dining at "The Hoop" or "The Bull," but, on the whole, Lichfield's was the favourite haunt of the very much up-to-date young men of that period. The feeding was not great but good : English, not French, and indeed, very few of us, just one here and there, could lay any claim to being in the slightest degree a *gourmet*. Personally, I knew but one, and he was "a wise young man," superior in classic lore and in English scholarship, to anyone, I might almost venture to say, of his own age and standing. This was Maurice Fitzgerald, younger brother of Gerald, who had come up as a Fellow-Commoner of Trinity. They were the sons of the very eccentric Mr. Fitzgerald, of Boulge Hall, Norfolk, brother of that Edward Fitzgerald whose memory is nowadays cherished by all students of Omar Khayyam. I do not remember ever to have seen their uncle Edward, but of his eccentric brother John, the squire of Boulge Hall, I heard so much that when he once came up to Trinity College, Cambridge, in search of his "two dear boys," who were supposed to be "stopping up" during the Christmas vacation "to read," I took the greatest possible care to keep out of his way. The Fitzgeralds were all eccentric, and I should say that my good friend Maurice was in

many ways not unlike his amiable uncle. Both were thorough students, loving literature "for itself alone"; both were shy, both wrote well and with scholarly finish, both were sufficiently rich to have no need to use the pen except as amateurs, and whether their works realised money or not was a matter of as little moment to the nephew as it had been to the uncle. In one point I am sure they differed. Maurice, "the young Mauritius," as George Meredith used afterwards to style him, had no sympathy whatever with that parsimonious, philosophic, bibulous, crusty, unfriendly renegade from the Mohammedan creed and practice, Omar ibn Ibrahim el Khayyami, whose occasional bursts into poetry have, by the exertions of the aforesaid Edward Fitzgerald, been preserved for English readers, of whom a certain select few have founded an Omar Khayyam admiration society which constitutes itself once a year, I believe, into a very pleasant and most convivial dinner-party—

"'Omar Khayyam!' let the toast pass,
I warrant 'twill prove an excuse for the glass."

Undemonstrative in manner, quiet in his life, a first-rate whist-player, and a great lover of the game at cards, which was *par excellence* the evening amusement of *our* time at the university, not caring much, if at all, for sports and pastimes, Maurice Purcell Fitzgerald was a genuine student of literature, ancient and modern, and could turn out polished epigrams in Greek and Latin, could write elegant

prose and satirical verse with the greatest ease. I firmly believe that, had he so chosen, he could have taken a double first in classics, and for the matter of that could have with ease have become scholar and fellow of his college. I fancy my friend, George Meredith, who was one of Maurice's most intimate friends for some years after leaving the university, would be of the same opinion. George Meredith took him as the model of his "Wise Youth" in *Richard Feverel*, at least, unless I am very much mistaken. However, at the time when we, Maurice and I, were undergraduates together, we had no knowledge of the distinguished novelist, whose name was hardly known but to the youth, wise or foolish, of the university.

In my first term Maurice and I met only occasionally, but I soon came to know his brother Gerald, who was my senior by some terms, and who was delighted with my proposition that a theatrical party should be given in my rooms (my companions, Norman and Vivian, sharing as "givers of the feast"), when it was arranged that a play of mine, written for the occasion, should be presented to our assembled guests. Such an idea was an absolute novelty. But there was a difficulty as to getting the female *rôle* adequately filled. Fortunately for our performance, there was among our acquaintance a young freshman, Arthur Cumberlege, whose manner of speaking and whose faculty of imitation pointed

him out as the very youth for the male representative of a female character. So he was selected to be "on the spindle side" in my farce, while Llewellyn, myself, and, I rather fancy, Gerald Fitzgerald filled the other rôles. But of Fitzgerald I am not at all sure. My friend Norman's room on the first floor, being a very fair size, was to be the theatre, and here a carpenter, one Lovett, a tall, heavy man of gipsy-like appearance, with heavy brows, long black beard, whiskers, and moustache (a sort of respectable "Maypole Hugh" in *Barnaby Rudge*), was engaged to rig up a stage with all appliances complete. The rehearsals, of course, were excellent fun, entailing innumerable convivial meetings for "business."

And it *was* a party! As many undergraduates as could be crammed in were invited, and, being invited, brought friends. The bedrooms were used as dressing-rooms for the actors; the orchestra was supplied by "white-headed Bob," on the violin, and his two companions, with harp and cornet-à-piston respectively. This band did a very good business in the university; the *trio* played all the popular tunes; and having practised by day never required to play "from notes" at night. They were accustomed to being shoved into small bedrooms, to sitting on narrow landings, and on still narrower staircases, and were perfect Mark Tapleys in finding themselves jolly in the most straitened cir-

cumstances—as far as space went—contented with whatever might be collected for them by the host “going round” to his guests “with the hat” for subscriptions. Of course the host himself always subscribed liberally; but that was how *our* harmony was provided for us in those delightful old Bohemian university days.

Tea and coffee were served before the overture was rung in, and having been cleared away during the performance, our back room (a long one placed at our disposal that evening by our good landlord, Mr. Voce Moore, who, bless him, had no sort of idea either as to the proportions or as to the character the entertainment would assume) was so cleverly arranged by emissaries from Lichfield's with a long table and a couple of small ones as to seat a considerable number, and to accommodate altogether about fifty guests. The performance began at eight or thereabouts. It “went”—how it went!! Arthur Cumberlege, as the lady in the farce, was a prodigious success, mainly perhaps on account of the novelty and absurdity of an undergraduate figuring in female attire. Llewellyn was very serious, I remember that, and couldn't find his spectacles, without which, to refresh his memory, by reading his part in a quiet corner, was impossible. Henry Norman was the prompter, wedged into a very warm corner, and as he unfortunately when nervous invariably stuttered (a defect comparatively unnoticed at our

go-as-you-please rehearsals, and quite lost sight of when we were "letter-perfect"), he could be of no assistance whatever to the unfortunate Llewellyn, who had at the very opening of the play to be "heard outside" exclaiming, "What! Your master not at home, you say," and then to enter, *à la cantonnade*, followed by the servant (Fitzgerald), who stared at him helplessly, but for the life of him was unable to "give him the word." Poor Norman was struggling with an attempt at utterance, and I, the author, was in an agony at the wing. Immense laughter and applause greeted this unexpected "situation," which was intensified on my shouting out his first line to him, when his memory suddenly returned, just as Norman, thus assisted, blurted out the words, and not only these but the remainder of the speech. After that, the audience being in tiptop good humour, everything went smoothly; Llewellyn found his spectacles when he made his first *exit*; and on his *rentrée* he was "as a giant refreshed with wine."

A great success that night was Arthur Cumberlege as *Mrs. Peter Blossom* (I was Peter, and as one of the hosts and the writer of the play received what is politely termed "a hearty recognition"), who at his first appearance was greeted with cheers, laughter, and great applause. He could affect mincing manners, but his build was somewhat ungainly for a "leading lady." The landlord came upstairs and pathetically begged

anybody he could get to listen to him "to tell them not to make such a noise, as he was certain it would attract the proctors." However, the noise subsided; the players, triumphant, retired to their dressing-rooms, the guests were invited by Norman and Vivian (representing the firm of tenants) to commence supper; and they did.

Ah! those were the days for supper! They couldn't sing—

"We are the boys
Who make no noise
In the merry uni-ver-si-tee."

For the majority there was about just an hour and a half in which to sup. All who were "in college" had to be back on the stroke of midnight for fear of being "gated," and so being done out of many a pleasant evening during the next week. Others, being in lodgings, could cut it rather fine and get in about 12.15 without being reported, though their landlord would receive them with an ominous shake of the head and an intimation that this was the last occasion he could allow the rule to be broken. A few men, and these the rowdiest, either belonged to Magdalen College, where licence was the order of the day and disorder of the night, or "kept" in rooms where no questions were asked and where the landlord only now and then found that he must save his "licence" by sacrificing his lodger—that is, when the lodger had been for some time "too greatly daring."

On this occasion all these varieties of gowmsmen were represented, and we had also among the party some jovial Bachelors and two or three Masters of Arts, who were "stopping up" either for their own amusement and nothing else, or under the delusion that they were reading for the theological examination. Added to these there were some friends from London, absolutely irresponsible. By 11.30 bowls of punch were going round, tobacco was in full blow, songs, or rather choruses, were being sung, stories were being told, and in a generally mixed way eating, drinking, talking, singing, and smoking were all going on simultaneously, when, the uproar being at its height and the three hosts beginning to wish their guests well clear of the place, the door opened and at it appeared the bald head and pale but determined visage of our now justly incensed landlord. "Gentlemen! gentlemen!" he commenced, but what he would have said has never been ascertained, as at that supreme moment a great shout went up, three cheers were given for "the stranger" who had so suddenly appeared "within our gates," and some one strewed, not "vine leaves," after Ibsenitish fashion, but lettuce leaves accompanied by their concomitant salad dressing, on his devoted head, or rather would have done so but that, in the twinkling of an eye, Mr. Moore dodged, "went down cleverly" as it were "to avoid punishment," and banging the door behind him disappeared, descending

the stairs just as the clock of Trinity boomed out midnight; and then—*sauve qui peut*—everyone at haphazard taking any cap, any gown, and any hat, then rushing off, tumbling over one another pell-mell downstairs and out at the door (which had been previously opened by our astute landlord) into Trinity Street, across the road, and inside the college gates with the very last stroke of the hour.

But our party was not yet finished. The Bachelors, the friends from town, and the Masters of Arts were still convivial. One Master of Arts was, thank goodness, still in possession of his "faculties," I rather fancy he was Junior Dean of King's, while another master, a "Johnian," I think (a dear, good, excellent fellow, who subsequently passed his examination after reading at the Theological College at Wells), was so hopelessly intoxicated that he had slipped under the table, and was not found until we happened to be looking for something or other. The sober Junior Dean, above referred to, interviewed, pacified, and reasoned with our landlord, who, being of a kindly disposition, consented to overlook the whole affair, unless, of course, the university authorities, under whom he held his licence, and on whom he in every way depended, should take cognisance of what had been an exceptional disturbance. So the party broke up, and only the three tenants, ourselves, with our amiable Master of Arts and his two friends from town, were left quite exhausted to regard

the scene of havoc. Glasses smashed, punch-bowls cracked, everything topsy-turvy, confusion hopeless, and *then* we found that we had still one other guest remaining, and that was Tom Tuppen, M.A.,—that was *not* his name, but no matter, 'twill serve,—fast asleep and snoring under the table.

We lugged him up to one of our spare rooms; we pinched him, we hit him, we dubbed him down on the bed. No, he only grunted: nothing could wake him. Then the Junior Dean gravely suggested, "Let's cork him!" as if he were a bottle. But the Junior Dean had an eye for colour, and it was "burnt cork" he meant. So burnt cork was produced, and the process was commenced. It was not artistically successful, and it was given up when about a third of his face was smudged. Then, after carefully removing the looking-glass, our Junior Dean went to his college, and we left Tom Tuppen, M.A., alone in his glory. Then all went to bed.

How the next morning that unhappy Tom Tuppen ever reached his rooms, which were a long way off, none of us ever learned. When we went to look for him he had gone. We didn't see him again for months—not, indeed, until the summer term when he came up to finish his reading, but he never alluded to "the night of the party" except as a very pleasant evening that he had spent with us; and, as our landlord was silent on the subject, our theory was that Mr. Voce Moore

had fortunately encountered Tom on the stairs in the early morning and had given him every opportunity of setting himself *white* again with the world before he went out to face it in Trinity Street. Perhaps, too, he was a little uncertain as to how the black got there. Had he done it himself? Anyway, no more was ever heard of it, and, as may be imagined, no questions were asked by us. But Mr. Voce Moore, as I imagine, did not shed tears when, after that term, I migrated to Green Street, where I lived happily ever afterwards.

CHAPTER XII

AN EXTINCT RACE—UPWARE REPUBLIC—DOWN-
ING COLLEGE—PECULIAR—WINES—THEATRES
— PAST AND PRESENT — REFERENCE — DR.
GUEST — HIGH - CHURCHISM — SIMEONITES —
ACTORS—HORTON RHYS—HIS COMPANY—
ABSITS—EXEATS—STARTING

THERE was a set up at the university about this time composed of hard riding men, hard hitting and fighting men, hard drinking men, and "hard and fast" living men, the like of whom I had never seen and only heard of before, and certainly have never come across since they vanished. They were not exactly young men as undergraduates go; some of them had been up and gone down and come up again (like drowning men, who perhaps had better have "gone under" at once and there an end), some had postponed taking their degree, some had been once plucked and were twice shy, but, taken altogether, they were the slangiest, rowdiest, rudest, worst - language, fortuitous concourse of university atoms, coming from various colleges, that could be found at any time in a

"seat of learning." Of this sort Magdalen College was then head centre, to which, as a kind of Liberty Hall, not a few men, for whom the restraint of Trinity was irksome, had migrated.

I remember the names and personality of every one of these Mohawks, with whom my, apparently, open defiance of the authorities—a defiance calculated with considerable caution—in starting a dramatic club at the Hoop Hotel, put me at once on excellent terms, and who felt towards me as in some sort a kindred spirit.

These "young bloods," as they would have been styled in a former generation, had formed themselves into a corporation entitled "The Upware Republic," whose seat of government was at a place called Upware, on the river Cam, in a public-house (the sign of which I do not remember), where their parliament was held for the discussion of sporting matters, and the arrangements for "ratting" matches as a trial of terriers. Should a stranger enter the room of the Upware Re-public House while these debates, assisted by pipes and liquor, were in progress, he was at once requested to withdraw, or if he chose to remain he would be elected a member of the Upware Republic, on the sole condition of his then and there fighting the temporary champion! Should the candidate for membership prove victorious, he was received with open arms, elected unanimously, asked what he would take, and was "treated" by everyone, and

there and then was empowered to hold the championship until deprived of it by some more lucky, or more skilled, pugilist. There was an entrance fee and a subscription, and the members were served with whatever the landlord ordinarily provided for their refreshment in the way of chops, steaks, liquor, and tobacco at something like two-thirds discount for cash, or whatever was the *reduction on taking a quantity*. The members also had the right of fishing and shooting in the fen country, and when there was a hard frost, and skating between Cambridge and Ely was in vogue, the palace of the Upware Republic was highly popular, and the rule as to strangers being compelled to fight the champion was somewhat, though not entirely, relaxed. The rules were printed, and I possessed a copy, which curiosity, I regret to say, I have lost. The Republic has long ago vanished, as have probably the majority of "choice spirits," all considerably my seniors, who boasted of membership and who, at different times, held office under the presidents who were elected annually. Among them were the best gentlemen jockeys, riders, and pugilists in the university. Not a few of them, once having quitted the university and broken with the Upwarian Republicanism, or rather republic-house-ism, distinguished themselves in various professions, including the ministry of the Church of England, and in the army, where one of the most devil-may-care of this set of very "peculiar people,"

known in the university, on account of his startlingly atheistic opinions, as "the Infidel," having entered a line regiment, after the militia, became not only a severe disciplinarian but also a preaching evangelical colonel, of the very highest character and the very strictest morals, a fighting member of militant Puritanism, who would have been dear to the heart of the sternest Cromwellians. Perhaps, "if to the rank of major-general" Shepherd Harvey (I do not guarantee the spelling as correct) subsequently rose, he may have become a very high churchman. Clearly, there were some roysterers of that rough-and-ready set to whom the Upware republic-house-ism did not do much harm. After all, this sort of thing was only a shortlived flash, shooting up from the flickering embers of the old "Tom-and-Jerry-boxing-the-watch" fires that were now rapidly dying out. But for a while it was certainly this sort of "life in London" revived, and I arrived at the university just in time to see about the last of it. The men who composed this "set" were characters, every one of them, and must have sat for their portraits as types to the author of *Cantabs*, a brochure illustrated by "Phiz," that made its appearance a little before my time, in company with two other similar publications entitled *Young Gentlemen* and *Young Ladies*, which preceded Albert Smith's *Gents* and his other *Studies from Nature*.

The mention of these "eccentrics" reminds me of a few other men of the same type, but who stopped short of the Upware Republic. One was a genial young fellow and, as I believe, first-rate sportsman, whose name was Cayley—Digby Cayley—and his sobriquet "Cracker." How "Cracker Cayley" came by his nickname I never ascertained; it had been thrown at him, and had stuck like a burr. He had commenced at Trinity, but on account of his quiet and inoffensive proceedings not being in perfect harmony with the views of the Trinity dons as to what the model life of an undergraduate should be, the Cracker "went down to avoid punishment" (as probably he and his friends would have expressed it), and "came up" again "smiling" in all the glory of velvet and gold tasselled cap, full black gown braided with gold, that distinguished the Fellow-Commoner of Downing from all other members of the university. But still more distinguished was he by the fact of his unique position as at that time *the only undergraduate at Downing College!* It was an ideal and quite remarkable position. There were professors, deans, chaplains, and so forth, and of course a master, all living in Downing, and all therefore at the service of the one solitary undergraduate. At other colleges the master and authorities settled the hours of lecture, the times of public worship and of public feeding in hall. In all other colleges the master and the fellows suited the

divisions of the day to their own convenience, and the undergraduates simply had to bow and accept their lordships' ruling. But at Downing it was not so. There the master, dons, chaplains, lecturers existed for the sake of the one undergraduate, and what *he* wished was their law. The "Gyp" (*i.e.* the undergraduate's college servant) would be sent in the morning by the chaplain to ask the fellow-commoner Cayley "if he would like any chapel to-day?" and "if so, at what hour would it be convenient for him to attend divine service?" And "the Cracker," who had probably only "turned in" at Downing about two a.m., having arrived from some roystering supper party at the town residence of one of his former companions, at Trinity or some other college, would reply, from under the bedclothes, curtly but decidedly; not indeed appointing any particular hour for the function, but simply dismissing the applicant with very brief but emphatic recommendations as to the direction in which the chaplain's emissary was to turn his steps. Subsequently his own "Gyp" would arrive and ask if there were any orders for "the kitchen" as to breakfast; and these being given, there would be handed in a polite note from the tutor, inquiring whether Mr. Cayley would be ready for lecture at such and such an hour, and if not, when? With the breakfast arrived a request from the chief cook, begging to be informed if Mr. Cayley intended to honour "hall" that day with his

company at dinner, and, according to his answer, so provision was made accordingly.

If the above sketch is in the least degree a correct picture of the state of things at Downing College when all the world, I mean when all *my* world, was young, it will be admitted that Downing College, like "Charley Mount" in the Irish ballad, "was a pleasant place" to live in. I am not at all sure of my *facts*; but I am quite clear as to the tradition, concerning the charm of existence at Downing, that obtained at Trinity. For "the man from Downing" had to come a long way to see his friends and chums at Trinity, and round and about that centre which was the "hub of the univers"-ity, and needs must that he came, otherwise he would have been isolated, since not a youth from Trinity with a reputation to lose ever visited Downing; and to a considerable number the very existence of such a college was unknown, while as "a local habitation and a name," it was, at the time of which I am speaking, associated in the minds of Trinity men chiefly with the style and title of "Cracker Cayley."

I have mentioned "wines," but in "my day" this fashion, as far as concerned Trinity, was fast dying out, and was yielding to late dinners and post-prandial conviviality; "wines," *i.e.* wine parties with fruit and cakes after hall were for babes among the freshmen; but breakfasts, *déjeûners à la*



CHARLES DOOLITTLE WALCOTT IN A PICTURE OF HIS OWN WRITTEN FOR
THE AMERICAN GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

fourchette at so convenient an hour in the morning as would suit the not-much-reading man (for any hour would suit the "non-reading man"), and dinners and suppers became quite *de rigueur* during the three years and a half that I was up at Trinity. Suppers naturally followed on late rehearsals and performances at the A.D.C., of which I shall here treat briefly, having given the full history of that club "in another place."

It is with a smile of complacency that I can look back to those early days and remember how, very gradually, the "dons" discovered that it would be as well first of all to wink at the amateur dramatic performances, and then to thoroughly open their eyes to the fact that it would be far better to give them first of all their tacit acquiescence, and finally such open encouragement as was shown, practically, by tutors granting extension of leave after "closing hours" to men who had earned their refreshment by their labour on the A.D.C. boards. As among these were included "supers" and actors with only a few lines or even a line to speak, the list of names on the play-bill soon became a pretty long one. However, since the time which I am describing there are other dramatic clubs, and there is a theatre supplied by good provincial companies, whose performances are highly attractive to members of the university, who have now their reviews published during term time, containing, among all the various

university items of news, criticisms of both amateur and professional performances. I am not aware whether the theatre in the town is licensed by the municipal or university authorities or by both together; it exists, and obtains considerable patronage. Nor have I heard that anybody is "a penny the worse," as many certainly were when the old Barnwell theatre, in prehistoric times, was in existence.

As to the foundation and formation of the A.D.C., Cambridge, which has by this time become an institution, and which in due course will share the fate of all such institutions and either be improved off the face of the earth or be "cornered" by its own offspring (for of all the dramatic clubs at Cambridge, and at Oxford too for the matter of that, the A.D.C., Cambridge, was the Alma Mater), and left to expire of inanition, the whole account of it is given in some special "Reminiscences"¹ to which, if the work be extant (for I fancy the sale was limited to a couple of editions of some two thousand copies), I must refer my readers, only here pausing to remark that the account of my interview with the Vice-Chancellor, therein given, is absolutely true, and that my sketch of him personally, "as he appeared" on that occasion, is, making allowance for a farcical touch given to the entire interview (at a time when,

¹ *Personal Reminiscences of the A.D.C., Cambridge.* London : Chapman & Hall. 1880.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



by the way, "interviewing" was an unknown art in England), precisely as I saw him. I state this, as recently I have read a contradiction of my verbal portraiture of Dr. Guest, Vice-Chancellor, on whom I was bidden to call at Caius College. "Beyond the present interview," I wrote, "I know nothing of this excellent man," and I describe him as a short, wizened, dried-up elderly gentleman, with little legs and a big head, like a serious Punch doll, wearing his academical cap, and with his gown hitched up under his elbows, which gave him the appearance of having recently finished a hornpipe before I came in. He had the fidgety air of a shortsighted person who has just lost his glasses.

Perhaps this wasn't the Vice-Chancellor; perhaps it was his *locum tenens*; but it was at the Vice-Chancellor's, Dr. Guest's, rooms that I had been commanded to appear, and the "don" who received me, and whose description I have given, was, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the Vice-Chancellor himself, Dr. Guest, Master of Caius, who availed himself of the chance of immortality offered him by inquiring, before granting his permission for the performance, "whether Cox and Box were Fellows of Trinity?"

The struggles the A.D.C. went through, all its difficulties and dangers up to the time when the Prince of Wales, now His Gracious Majesty King Edward VII., kindly accepted the presidency of the

Club, are they not all written in the aforesaid work? "which when found make a note of."

One *spécialité* at the start of the A.D.C. was the wonderful impersonation by my friend, Frederick Collins Wilson, of the part of *Dinah* in the burlesque of *Villikins*. It absolutely took the audience by storm, and the chief honours of the three nights' entertainment undoubtedly fell to Wilson. Cumberlege, who had taken the "spindle side" in the private performance in my rooms already recorded, had disappeared; I fancy he left after my second term, but at all events the memory of his success was utterly wiped out by the veritable triumph of Wilson's *Dinah*, with songs and dances. Fred. Wilson was not in the least "fast": he was religious and intensely "high church," far and away in advance of anything that was at that time considered "high" at Cambridge, where "Puseyism" was regarded by the majority as little more than a "fad" or an eccentricity in religion, just as had been looked upon Simeonism and ultra-evangelical practices in years gone by.

The nickname "Sim" was then still occasionally used to denote a sort of respectable "Stiggins," who would turn up his eyes and hold up his hands in horror at the mere mention of a dramatic performance, and who regarded theatres as temples of the devil.

But Fred. Wilson, who as a university man was



of the quietest type possible, loved the drama; at home he was always for "character" and "dressing up," and was, naturally, a clever actor in a certain line. Undoubtedly his *forte* was the assumption of feminine character, and his youthful, slim figure, his not unhandsome face, of rather a Jewish cast, guiltless of whiskers (he shaved in obedience to the dictates of his artistic conscience), his delicate hands and peculiarly neat ankles, fitted him, beyond anyone else I ever remember to have seen on or off the A.D.C. boards, for the assumption of such petticoat parts as he consented to play. On referring to *Personal Reminiscences of the A.D.C.*, I find that Wilson's first appearance was as *Distaffina* in *Bombastes*, and the following term, when he appeared as *Dinah* in my burlesque of *Villikins*, the success was so great that we determined on following it up with another performance of three nights' duration at the end of the term in December, when, however, "one Mr. C. Digby" (F. C. Wilson) and "one Mr. Algernon," being unable to think of anything outside their reading for their degree, could not study any new parts.

There were up at Cambridge a few of us in whom the *cacoëthes agendi* was going at that time overpoweringly strong. It seized on Gerald Fitzgerald, my senior by nearly two years, on Charles Donne, also considerably my senior (staying up at the university until he had decided on his profession), and

Reginald Kelly of Trinity Hall, whose quaintness as a dry low comedian I remember as associated in my mind with the peculiarities of those inimitable actors, Keeley, Harley, Compton, and I may add "little Clarke of the Haymarket." In London, as it happened, I had been introduced by Paddy Green one night at Evans's to Captain Horton Rhys, who, under the name of Captain Morton Price, was an amateur of some distinction, travelling about the country with a small company of non-professionals playing for charities, local and otherwise, at various provincial theatres. As the times chosen for those performances were when such theatres as those of Bath, Cheltenham, Plymouth, and Leamington had just finished their pantomime season, and when, therefore, the managers were only too ready to welcome any "attraction" coming to them on favourable terms,—and the amateurs themselves took nothing save absolutely their temporary expenses (although I fancy Morton Price, like the equally well-known Captain Disney Roebuck, did not give himself all this trouble for merely "the fun of the thing"—at least so I subsequently ascertained),—the dates for several "shows" on a circuit were easily arranged; and when Captain Morton Price suggested that I might like to join him on tour and bring two or three of my A.D.C. companions, I accepted for myself. Subsequently Gerald Fitzgerald and Kelly gave in their adhesion. Horton Rhys had arranged to



THE BOYS TAKING A BREAK AFTER A LONG DAY OF WORKING ON THE FARM.

settle all dates and details, and in course of time he wrote to say that we should be required for a tour in the early spring season of 1856. The pieces were all arranged; the parts were sent to us; he gave us only a few days' notice, and the *rendezvous* was to be Limmer's Hotel,¹ London, whence we were to start for our theatres. The gallant captain being himself quite independent (he had a good house, a charming wife and small family at Leamington, his head hunting quarters), simply gave the word autocratically, and expected us to come up to time with our *Box and Cox* (of course), *Charles the Second*, and one or two other pieces, including my own burlesque of *Villikins*, and always *The Waterman*, in which the captain himself, having a really good voice and a florid style that would have delighted a generation before the time of Sims Reeves, was to please everybody, including himself, by his rendering of "Did you never hear" and of sundry ballads, specially introduced to display the captain's musical ability. The opera of *The Waterman*, as I remember, consisted chiefly of the captain, who never seemed to

¹ Limmer's Hotel, with its snug bar and sanded floor, very different from what it is to-day, was the headquarters of sporting men and men about town. Jem Collins, the head waiter and mixer of "drinks," was (I remember the quotation, having heard it when quite a boy) celebrated in this verse to the air of *Jenny Jones*—

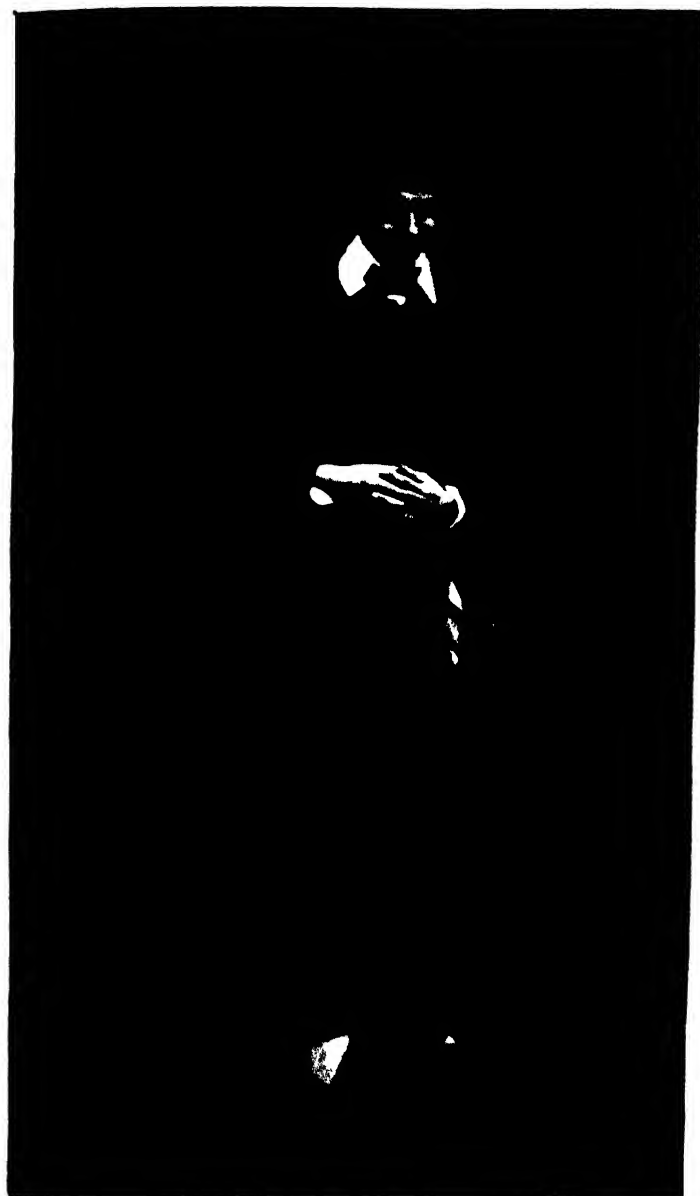
"My name is Jem Collins, head waiter at Limmer's,
The corner o' Conduit Street, Hanover Square,
An' my occipashun is sarvin' out brimmers
To such sportin' covies as chance to be there."

be off the stage, and appropriated the songs of all the other parts if any one of us showed signs of nervousness or vocal incapacity.

Now, the fater for us was that these performances were fixed at Bath, Cheltenham, Leamington, Plymouth, Bristol, just when it was our "term time" at Cambridge, and when we, Reginald Kelly and myself, were bound to attend lectures and keep our term, he at Trinity Hall, I at Trinity. Fitzgerald at Trinity was not in quite the same case; he had a term to spare, having kept most of his up to that date.

Now, in those good old days, *absits* and *exeats*, which were, respectively, tickets-of-leave for a day, and for any length of time, were not so very difficult to obtain from one's tutor—if he were not asked too often.

Some undergraduates, so the legend went, killed their family off by degrees, at one time with mournful countenance, asking for an *exeat* to visit a dying relative, at another, requesting to attend a grandmother's funeral in Scotland or Ireland. The only members of the family left alive were, of course, the parents; but it is related how an artless youth, having exhausted all his relatives as an excuse, desiring an *exeat* in order to spend a few quiet days in London "unbeknown" to anyone, bethought him that his end would be gained if he approached his tutor in the garb of woe, with a most sorrowful



THE HON. TIMO TICH AS SAMMY

countenance, and hardly able to sob out, "Please, sir, I—I—(*sob*)—want . . . an (*sob*) *exeat*—for"—

"Your father or mother ill?" asked the sympathetic tutor. "I hope not."

The youth gasped out, struggling with his emotion—

"I'm—a—(*sob*)—fraid, sir, my poor, dear (*sob sob*) mother"—

When the tutor interrupted him with, "Really, Mr. So-and-so, that must be very sudden"—

"O—ve—(*sob*)—ry—(*sob*) very!"

"As," continued the tutor blandly, "I have only just received a letter from your father this morning, who writes evidently in excellent health, and talks of coming down here to-day to see how you are progressing, as he is not quite satisfied."

Imagine! The artless undergraduate had there and then to assume a look of the most intense joy!

"So my mother (*becoming*) is not ill?"

"Evidently not," replied the tutor. "Or your father wouldn't be leaving home. And, therefore, there will be no necessity for the *exeat*. On the contrary, you will meet your father at the station."

"Oh yes, sir—when—is—?"

"The twelve train for town."

The youth bowed his acknowledgments, and was about to quit, when the tutor stopped him at the open door—

"Mr. So-and-so, I don't think I shall see my way to granting you any *absits* or *excats* for some considerable time to come. You had better devote all your time to study, and then that will give the other unfortunate members of your family, the state of whose health has caused you so much anxiety in the past, time to get perfectly well, and perhaps to be taken ill again in regular rotation. Good-morning."

Fortunately, I had never traded on the family health, but now I was to begin. I determined upon my grandmother. I was ready to burst into tears, and "weep for Hecuba." Immense trouble I took with the touching narrative, and very, very nervous I was when I called on my tutor. He was hard at work.

"If you please, sir, I've called to ask you for an *exeat*."

My tutor looked up from his books and manuscript, hesitated, and then asked—

"Is it a matter of serious importance?" Now I was quite prepared to play "my grandmother," but I kept her in reserve, and simply answered, but very, very gravely, the question.

"Yes, sir, it is a matter of *serious* importance."

Whereupon he said no more, but tearing a piece of paper from a foil out of a sort of cheque-book, he signed date and name, and gave me the "ticket-of-leave." Not a word about my grandmother, thank goodness! With a light heart, a free and elastic conscience, I quitted the room, and rushed

away in case he should change his mind, recall me, and retract the ticket. But he was too busy, and as my attendance at lectures had never demanded from him any exceptional show of interest in my proceedings, I daresay he did not give the matter another thought. Nor did I.

How Reginald Kelly obtained his *excuse* I forget. He was a very steady and regular undergraduate; his family had always been at Trinity Hall, and I believe that he simply told the truth, explained he had unfortunately made some engagements which would keep him away, much to his regret, for a few days, and therefore an *excuse* was necessary, as an *absit* would cover only one day. Of course he didn't say he should be away for over a fortnight; that was not necessary.

CHAPTER XIII

ON TOUR—BATH MANAGER—PLYMOUTH—LONDON—MARIE WILTON—BUCKSTONE—PADDY—A MOMENTOUS INTERVIEW—BACK TO CAMBRIDGE—LONGS AND SHORTS—COACHING DAYS—BIG SMITH—COMPANIONS—ECCLESIASTICAL—STATE OF PARTIES—ARTHUR WARD—FREEMASONRY—SIR JAMES CRICHTON-BROWNE'S POSER—THE MASTER OF TRINITY AND HIGH CHURCHMEN—BAR OR CHURCH—LIGHTFOOT—HAROLD BROWNE—ADVICE—UPTON RICHARDS—A NEW DEPARTURE—CUDDESDON

SO away we went ; and with Horton Rhys "did" Bath, where we made the acquaintance of the manager, Mr. Chute, a great, big, very all-round actor, uncommonly like the pictures of Mr. Crummles in *Nicholas Nickleby* ; then we did Cheltenham, of which I do not remember much ; then we travelled on to Plymouth, where I was introduced to Mr. Newcombe, a fine old specimen of a race of provincial theatrical managers now absolutely extinct as the Dodo. He was hand and glove with "the nobility and gentry" of the neighbourhood ; he was

a good sportsman, kept hunters, subscribed and rode to hounds ; and being clean shaven, with a frenchified "imperial" on his chin, when in his hunting costume (green cutaway coat, breeches, Napoleon boots, and black hat) he looked uncommonly like the French "sportsman" that Leech used to caricature, or a "master of the ring." His theatre was a model ; his pay good ; his character as man and manager irreproachable. I forget whether we played at any other theatres *en route*, but we finished at Leamington, where Captain Horton Rhys put us up in first-rate style at his house, introduced us to the club, and made us thoroughly at home, so much so that we quite forgot all about rehearsal, and never went near the theatre until it was time to dress and "go on." All I remember of that performance is that Kelly stuck, that Horton Rhys swore ; that I was all right in my own burlesque, but that Fitzgerald had somehow got "fogged" and was very unsteady as Villikins, while the lady who had kindly undertaken the part of Dinah, not having rehearsed it with him, was unable to prompt, but had the presence of mind to give "the cue for duet" to the orchestra, which thereupon struck up, and so startled Fitzgerald that he could neither say nor sing anything, but left it all to his Dinah, who cleverly finished the scene with a favourite dance, in which she had been accustomed to obtain an encore in the pantomime, and which won her a recall on this occasion ; then all was over

and the scene changed before Fitzgerald had recovered his senses and staggered off the stage somehow.

This association with Captain Horton Rhys, resulted in my accepting his invitation to play for some charity, I forget what it was, at the Lyceum Theatre, which had been recently occupied by Charles Dillon and his company, who had been playing *Belphegor, the Mountebank*; at least, so I fancy, as far as I can tax my memory, though I seem to remember having at some earlier date seen the piece at the Adelphi. I think, too, but am not certain, that when I saw *Belphegor*, Miss Marie Wilton, then quite a gay girl of, perhaps, fifteen, was playing the part of Belphegor's son. Whether the future Lady Bancroft was playing this part or was appearing as Cupid in a burlesque, *Atalanta* (I fancy it was), written by Frank Talfourd, and played at the Haymarket, I cannot precisely remember (though I remember her in both characters), but indelibly impressed on my memory is, that Miss Marie Wilton, then quite a young but very rising and *piquante* actress, was cast for the part of a chambermaid in a one-act farce, *A Phenomenon in a Smockfrock*, in which Captain Morton Price played *John Buttercup*, and I was cast for the part of *Old Somebody*, who had to be insulted by every one and snubbed by the chambermaid. I wish I could recall the "gag" that I, a mere amateur in my novitiate, attempted, during a scene with this

expert professional *soubrette*, of some two or three years' experience of the stage, and how utterly I was routed and literally "shut up" by some smart retort of hers. I remember making my peace with her in so far as to be privileged to walk with her to the family residence, just over Waterloo Bridge, when I was introduced to one of her sisters, a very pretty, dark-eyed girl, afterwards Mrs. Drake, and was shown Marie's new flaxen wig, which she was to wear as Cupid, and which had just arrived from the *perruquier's*. Then in the evening came the performance, of which I remember very little except that some distinguished persons of title were present, that there was a gold-fringed satin programme, with lettering in blue (it is in my possession to this day), and that Horton Rhys, *alias* Morton^{*} Price, sang his songs as usual, and was in a general way very much pleased with himself, without any reference to his company, which, professionals excepted, from an artistic point of view, had not done him much credit.

In this and my appearances as already recorded consisted my sole acquaintance with the professional stage.

And, by the way, one, only one, actor did I meet in private life, the way of it being as follows. After the success of the entertainment given in my rooms at Cambridge during my first term, it entered into my head that this farce of mine would be "just the

very thing for Buckstone." But how to bring it under his notice? I had heard of the difficulties of "struggling authors," I had read of them, and it had occurred to me that as a university man I was far too well attired and too prosperous to merit even the small amount of attention which I was given to understand dramatic authors received at the hands of managers. In *The Man in the Moon* I had come across some very distressing scenes, written by Albert Smith, between managers, lessees of theatres, and dramatic authors; and it was from Albert Smith in his *Mr. Ledbury* and his *Pottleton Legacy* that I had learnt to look upon dramatic authorship as but a very poorly paid profession, wherein, unless possessed of a thorough knowledge of French, you had very little chance of making any money at all. There was, as I afterwards found, a certain amount of truth in Albert Smith's sketches of professional theatrical characters, and, at that period, the sums realised by dramatic authors within the latter half of the nineteenth century would, in the eyes of their predecessors, have been beyond the dreams of avarice. However, the point for a dramatist of eighteen years of age was to get a piece accepted and played by a London manager. To achieve this would have indeed been a veritable triumph. So I confided in my friend, Paddy Green of Evans's, where, as an *habitué*, I spent a considerable portion of my nights during the vacation, and sometimes when

coming up to town on an *absit* would prefer putting up at the comfortable old hotel, whereof Paddy was the landlord, in Covent Garden, and paying ready money, to increasing my indebtedness to Mr. Jubber, the landlord of Long's in Bond Street. Paddy Green was an intimate friend of Buckstone's, and most kindly undertook to present my manuscript farce to him, giving me also a letter of introduction, and telling me to call on the eminent comedian on a certain afternoon. Imagine my delight! Well do I remember going nervously to the stage door in Suffolk Street and being dubiously inspected by a surly-looking doorkeeper, and having humbly to withdraw on one side as certain actors, having just finished a late rehearsal, passed out. Among them were men whose faces I recognised immediately. Here came the smug Mr. Braid; here was the short, stout, and choleric-looking Mr. Rogers (Lord Halsbury is a pleasant likeness of this amusingly stolid comedian, who has long, long ago "joined the majority"); and here the dapper, crisp-speaking "Little Clark." They gave a glance at me, as much as to say, "I wonder what *he* wants," and then passed out. Some ladies followed and departed quickly; and then, a boy having said that "the gent was to be shown in," I was ushered in on to the stage, right at the back, where, it being very dark, I stumbled up against a wing, and had scarcely recovered myself and hardly become accustomed to

the obscurity, when the boy, opening a side door, indicated that if I "stepped this way the gov'nor would be with me in a few minutes."

I entered: it was a kind of office, there was a writing table covered with manuscripts, letters, and writing paper; files of theatrical bills were hanging on the walls, the place was dimly lighted through a dirty window, and there was a general atmosphere of mystery and mustiness.

I had time to look about me; and on the table—could it be possible . . . yes—there was my manuscript play—unrolled, opened! Good! then, at least, *it had been read!* Just to think of it! And in another few days it might be in full rehearsal, with the inimitable Buckstone in the principal part—that part in which I had already made such a hit in my own rooms at Cambridge, with perhaps charming Miss Louisa Howard, or elegant Miss Reynolds, as the wife! And while I was in this agitated state entered a funny-looking, round-faced, clean-shaved, twinkling-eyed little man in an old faded dressing-gown and slippers.

"How dye do?" he said.

At once I knew him. There was no mistaking that peculiar twang, that rich unction of tone, that strangely humorous catching of the breath. . . . It was Buckstone!

I did not say, "Mr. Buckstone, I presume," as that formula had not then been invented by Dr.

Livingstone on meeting explorer Stanley, but only felt very hot, peculiarly uncomfortable, and began to name Paddy Green as a reference, speaking of him of course as "Mister Green," not "Paddy."

Buckstone interrupted me with "Yes, Green told me. So I—er—read the piece."

I held my breath, and then I murmured—"and"—

"Well—er—it's not bad for a beginner"—evidently a refusal—and so to speak I began to shrink back into the shell from which I had only just begun to emerge. "Yes," he continued, "it's not bad—but it—er—*it won't do for this place.*"

And he handed me the manuscript. How I hated the sight of it, how I loathed the touch of it! but I accepted it from him, and devoutly wished that our positions could have been reversed, and that *he* could have "accepted it" from me.

I thought I would make just one struggle. "Perhaps," I began diffidently and oh, so humbly! "if you could suggest some improvement"—

"Eh?" he asked, putting his hand to his ear. Then it flashed across me suddenly that Paddy Green had warned me of "Bucky's being a bit deaf."

"I was saying," I recommenced in a higher key, "that if you could suggest any improvement."

"No—er—I don't think so," he replied, cutting short my speech as he opened a side door, and invited me to pass into the passage, which, taking the hint, I did.

"It's a fine day for walking," was his next original remark as he opened the front door, and, with my infernal manuscript shoved awkwardly into the tail pocket of my under-coat, where it would be completely out of sight of the public gaze, I stepped out, agreeing with him as to his opinion on the weather, and bidding him as genially as I possibly could, "Good-bye."

"Eh?" he said, with his hand to his ear, then suddenly catching, as it were, the echo of my farewell, he smilingly repeated, "Oh—yes—good-bye—good-bye," and therewith the door was closed, and I found myself in Suffolk Street, depressed, disillusioned, and with a kind of feeling of being alone in the world.

At that moment from out of the United University Club at the corner came a college friend, my senior by one year, who was also in town on an *absit*.

"Hallo!" he cried, "when did you come up?"

"Yesterday. And you?"

"This morning. Lunched here. Where have you been?"

"Oh!" I replied negligently, "only just calling on old Bucky." I'd heard Paddy Green speak of him as "Bucky."

"Old *who*?" repeated my friend, puzzled.

"Bucky. Buckstone," I explained.

"Do you know him?" asked my friend in evident



LORD RICHARD GROSVENOR, 5TH EARL OF EGLAR,
WIFE OF ALBERT H. GALLERIE.

admiration, for I was a mere freshman, and in my second term.

"My dear chap," I answered, plucking up, "I shouldn't call on him if I didn't know him. But I'm off to get my things at Evans's and back again to Cambridge by last train."

So we parted. He was so much impressed that the next term he requested me to propose him for the A.D.C. I believe that afterwards he spoke of me to his friends as being on the best of terms with all the leading London actors.

The three years passed at the university, whether Oxford or Cambridge, will, I should say, be always reckoned as among the happiest, if not quite the happiest, in any man's life. There is just so much constraint as gives to the youthful undergraduate an increased zest for the sweets of liberty. Then the reading parties during "the long"! My recollection of these seasons of study and recreation is of the very pleasantest.

During two "longs," what a merry and studious party we were, under the guardianship of Hamblyn Smith, M.A., dear old "Big Smith" (of Caius I think he was), the best of all "coaches." One year we went to "the Lakes," and "did" Cumberland and Westmoreland pretty thoroughly. Another "vac." we passed principally at Bangor, and after that, three of us, "Dicky" Grosvenor (now Lord Stalbridge), Julius Rowley (who became the Reverend Julius),

and myself "took a boat and went to sea." Precisely like Thackeray's three sailors, we "laded she" with a magnificent cargo of eatables. Unfortunately, in returning from the Isle of Man she sprung a leak; and it was a case of "all hands to the pumps" until we arrived safely at Liverpool. This accident having brought our cruise to an untimely finish, we had still on hand a considerable amount of provisions. All that we did not bestow on the crew (of two men and a boy) we set to work to demolish, and instead of stopping on shore at an hotel, we always returned to the ship (having several days of our lease of the yacht—an old fishing smack—unexpired) for our meals, about which, as they mainly consisted of potted things in tins, there was a certain monotony which at last decided us on packing up our traps and staying at the celebrated Turtle Hotel at Liverpool "for one night only," previous to the party breaking up and not meeting again until the commencement of the October term at Trinity.

I pass over all the A.D.C. term at Cambridge as dealt with in my book (already alluded to) of A.D.C. reminiscences.

At the beginning of my last year up at Trinity, and after I had begun "keeping my terms" at Lincoln's Inn (which meant spending three pleasant days "on leave" in London in order to "eat my dinners" in the hall of Lincoln's Inn) with a view

to ultimately becoming a barrister. Some clergyman, while I was on a visit in the country, pointed out to me that as none of my cousins were going into the Church, the living (I forget its name), which my Uncle George had purchased, would go abegging unless I liked to become a parson. How it came about that I did give this idea some considerable amount of attention, I cannot for the life of me say. But so it was, and while still "keeping my terms" at Lincoln's Inn, I put the matter before my father, who, though at first rather disappointed at not being the proud parent of a Lord Chancellor, consoled himself with the prospect of having a son who would be on the high road to the Archbishopric of Canterbury; though, by the way, I doubt whether he knew very much about ecclesiastical titles and dignities. However, there was the living, and I rather think it was worth about six hundred a year, but in these early days of youthful enthusiasm "money was no object."

During my last term at Cambridge I was somewhat startled on being informed by a youthful high churchman, a Mr. Kingdon, one of "the straitest sect of the Pharisees," that to attend the Masonic Lodge was incompatible with the ecclesiastical profession. I remember pointing out to this enthusiast (he was a scholar of Trinity), on his paying me a visit, that the master of the lodge was the Rev. Arthur Ward, who had the reputation of being a

decided high churchman, in spite of his costume in which "low" predominated, as instead of a stiff clerical collar he had a low untidy white tie, a low-cut waistcoat, and low shoes. My interlocutor had evidently his doubts as to Ward's orthodoxy, and was clearly dissatisfied with me on account of my theatrical proclivities, and my still continuing to be president of the A.D.C., and taking part in the performances. By the way, I have forgotten to say that the club presented me with a very handsome silver inkstand on my "going down." It was presented to me at a large supper party of the members of the A.D.C., when Rowley Hill (afterwards Bishop of Sodor and Man) was the spokesman.

My high church acquaintance looked askance on the Rev. Arthur Ward and myself as being both Freemasons, a brotherhood which, as I found, was held in holy horror at that time by all of Mr. Kingdon's way of thinking. Why they condemned Freemasonry I could not understand, nor could they explain how it was that so many of the clergy of the Church of England were not only members of the Masonic body, but also actually held office in it as chaplains of lodges and grand-chaplains and so forth. The excellent young High Church clerical student could only deplore that such things should be permitted, and as we did not at all agree either as to Freemasonry or theatricals, he

gave me up as a hopeless case, and I saw him no more.

I have discovered a small diary, irregularly kept, but fairly recording religious sentiments, motives of action, doubts, difficulties, and events between September 1857 up to and inclusive of January 1859. It is, personally, most interesting, but, except for a few matters here and there, the entries do not come within the scope of these "Reminiscences," which are not of the nature of an *Apologia pro vitâ meâ*.

The above period was a critical one with me, as I was then shaking the undergraduate dust off my feet and was making an attempt "to rise on," not "my dead self," but on what I may term my "moribund self" (as far as university life was concerned, with a vast amount of kicking power still left, and, I may add, likely to remain "going fairly strong" to the end) "to better things." Very seriously, at the end of 1856, had I, by "special dispensation" (on account of my not being of age) become a Free and Accepted Mason. The Rev. Arthur Ward, to whom I have already referred, was the Master of the Lodge, and an excellent Master he was, well posted up in all the traditions of the masonic rites and ceremonies. With me had entered as apprentices, my friends, the companions of the yachting trip and reading tour aforementioned, "Dicky" Grosvenor and Julius Rowley. I can,

honestly say, for myself, that I was most thoroughly in earnest, and, unsettled as I was at that time as to my religious position, inclining towards the High Church views, after reading Blunt's *History of the Reformation* and Hallam's *Constitutional History*, I recognised in Freemasonry, as it then appeared to me, a scheme of wide-reaching benevolence, of Christian charity, of universal brotherhood under the highest religious sanction. Freemasonry seemed to me "to supply a want," and, within a year, being punctual in attendance and working at it most enthusiastically, I was "raised to the 'sublime degree.'" I copy this from an entry in my diary "on the 10th November 1857." And as evidence of the serious earnestness of my intentions at the time, I may copy this note from the diary, which runs thus: "May the blessing of God be with all those who in deed and in truth act up to the principles of Masonry and the faith of a Christian." Even then it seems that I did not confuse the two.

The banquetings, the toasts, and the convivialism of the craft always seemed to me utterly out of place as following directly on the solemn "rites and mysteries." The ceremonies could not have been more impressively carried out anywhere than in our University Lodge, under the Mastership of the Rev. Arthur Ward, who, however, a little later in life, found the practice of Freemasonry

somewhat inconsistent with his advancing High Church views. Logically, no Christian can be a freemason unless he be the sort of hedging Christian who, imitating the liberal-minded emperor, Alexander Severus, included a statue of our Lord among those of all the gods with whose names and attributes he was acquainted. As my eminent friend Sir James Crichton-Browne put the query very neatly to a well-known Mason holding high office in the fraternity :

“ If Masonry has a secret the knowledge of which would benefit all mankind, then for Masonry to keep such knowledge to itself is immoral. If, on the other hand, the ‘secret’ is *not* for the benefit of mankind, in professing it to be so Masonry is again guilty of an immoral act. If you Masons say that it is only to benefit certain persons who are prepared to receive such knowledge, then there is an end of the universality of the Brotherhood of Freemasonry.”

There was no answer to this, and, so far as I can see, there is none.

While I am touching upon the fringe of the religious question up at the university in my time, I may mention that in this diary of mine I find frequent mention of the laxity of practice and the carelessness of public worship in the chapel of Trinity-in the time of Dr. Whewell. I remember the young men of very High Church views going up,

to communion in chapel when Dr. Whewell was administering, and, when the "elements," at the end of the service, remained "unconsumed," Dr. Whewell used to insist on the communicants who had already "received" standing up in their places to "consume" the remaining bread and wine, which he and his assistant clergy (I forget who they were) handed round. If in this "after-service" Dr. Whewell caught sight of anyone devoutly kneeling, he would wait to see if this devotee meant to stand up. When communicant undergraduates, being of an ultra-high colour, discovered that, by refusing to rise at the bidding of the Master of Trinity, they would not be forced to "receive" twice at one celebration, which was to them a "sacrilege," they continued kneeling, and Dr. Whewell passed on. I fancy they were marked men in consequence, but I do not know, unless they were students, what effect "marking" would have had on them. *A propos* of "marking," it was essential for anyone qualifying for "taking orders" to be "marked" in by the two officials whose duty it was to score up all attendances in hall and chapel.

I remember bewailing this parlous state of things to some of the higher-Church-minded clergy of Trinity, one or two of whom used to conduct an "early celebration" on Sunday morning at St. Giles's Church in the town, where those who, like myself, shunned the college chapel as long as Dr. Whewell

was the "celebrant," could worship in peace and quietness according to their conscience. "Vestments" were unheard of in those days, at least at Cambridge. An unobtrusively embroidered "stole" was about the extent of the ritualistic excesses at that time; the cassock and surplice were strictly academical, and the "Genevan bands," as big as a barrister's or a judge's, were still worn by the officiating clergy. But these also were "academic." As for lights, incense, genuflexions, "crossings," and so forth, I did hear whispers of such matters, and was told that some "guild" ("of St. Albans," I think) indulged in ecclesiastical functions, with incense and a crucifix in a private room; but, if it were so, with this sort of hole-and-corner worship I never had the slightest sympathy, and personally never saw anything of the sort. The young men of my way of thinking at this time with whom I consorted were, I find, Cecil Alderson (a younger son of Judge Alderson), the Hon. "Freddy" Cavendish (the unfortunate victim of the Phoenix Park murder in 1882), and one Mr. Robarts, of whom the first and last became Anglican clergymen.

At this time I was beginning to think that it would be better to become a clergyman than a barrister. On the Saturday before Septuagesima Sunday, 1858, I took my B.A. degree, and soon after this I find I had prevailed upon my father to let me commence "reading for the Church," and had

obtained his sanction for proceeding up to Cuddesdon College, there to study for "Orders."

How I came to hit upon Cuddesdon instead of the college at Wells (where several of my Cambridge friends had already entered as students) was by seeing this ecclesiastical seminary frequently mentioned in *The Union*, an "ultra-high" newspaper at that time. Dr. Lightfoot, afterwards Bishop of Durham, was now "officially" my tutor, as I was a graduate "remaining up." I still reckoned myself as being "on his side," and him I consulted as to reading. His strong point (*his* strong point, not *mine*) was Greek Testament; but, as far as I can remember, I did not attend many of his lectures, but favoured those of Dr. Harold Browne, who was subsequently made a bishop; of Norwich I think, but am not sure.

In the course of my reading, coming to the study with "an open mind," I stumbled at many difficulties, to which Professor Harold Browne was always most courteously ready to listen, and, if possible, to explain, or at least to put the student in the right way for arriving at an elucidation.

He was a tall, thin, courtly, "professorial" person, of the old type of clergyman, of the ancient (perhaps by now extinct) high school, which ran into no kind of danger by excess, either in doctrine or in practice, and was personally most amiable. It was he who suggested my going up to

Cuddesdon, seeing that my bent was more towards Oxford than towards Wells. Had he been very much worried by my pertinacity he might have bid me "go to Bath—*and* Wells." But he did not. He also mentioned the name of a certain Mr. Upton Richards, a clergyman in London, who was vicar, or rector, of All Saints, Margaret Street, at that time only a church in the catacombs, where the services were held in a kind of schoolroom, temporarily fitted up as a chapel, long before the splendid church and church-house were built by the munificence of Beresford Hope.

Upton Richards was in appearance about the last clergyman I should have remarked as a representative High Churchman. He did *not* wear a "high" waistcoat, he did *not* try to ape the costume of a Catholic priest, he had a "low" white tie, secular whiskers, and in bold teaching was considerably behind his younger curates. However, to him I went for "counsel and advice," and in less than ten minutes he had settled the question for me, and had confirmed Professor Harold Browne's recommendation. So I put myself in communication with the Principal of Cuddesdon, the Rev. S. Pott, subsequently Archdeacon Pott, and by Easter 1858 I was duly installed in a student's room at Cuddesdon College, under the vice-principalship of the Rev. Henry Parry Liddon.

CHAPTER XIV

FROM CAMBRIDGE TO CUDDESDON—LIDDON—
BISHOP WILBERFORCE—ARCHDEACON POTT
—GOLIGHTLY TROUBLE—A VACATION TRIP—
DIFFICULTIES—BENSON—COWLEY—DEVELOP-
MENT—AN ORATION—A TERRIFIC SCENE—
NEXT MORNING—FRIENDLY PARTY—BISHOP
—ARCHITECT

RARELY do I remember being more astonished than when on arriving at the ecclesiastical Anglican seminary at Cuddesdon, a few miles out of Oxford, I was received by the Rev. Henry Parry Liddon, subsequently to be more widely known as Canon Liddon, one of the best preachers, if not the very best, among his contemporaries. Accustomed to such clerical dons as the University of Cambridge produced, attired in the ordinary black suit and white tie, with college cap and M.A. gown, and, as a rule, with a fine head of hair and full whiskers, I was "in amazement lost" on being received at the college by an Italian-looking ecclesiastic, glittering-eyed, clean-shaved, and closely-cropped, wearing a white band for a collar, and a black cassock with a broad belt, who, offering me his hand, welcomed

me to the college with a sweetly persuasive smile suggestive of the slyest possible humour. The persuasive smile became occasionally rather irritating to anyone thoroughly in earnest, and though his insinuating manner was most charming, and himself with the students most popular, yet could he at that time have spoken without the fear of "Sam Oxon" before his eyes, he would have won from all of us unlimited confidence. Personally, I have always thought of him as a delightful tutor and a charming companion, as long as the conversation was confined to indifferent topics. Reverencing the bishop "because of his office," which he "magnified" to any extent, he had not, as it seemed to me, a very exalted opinion of him as man or as a churchman; and his imitations of "Sam" Wilberforce's peculiarly unctuous manner showed that, as a professional mimic, the Vice-Principal of Cuddesdon might have turned this talent to some account. He was an excellent imitator of everybody, but the bishop was his *chef-d'œuvre*; and then he invariably prefaced his imitation by speaking of him in an affectionate and apologetic tone, as "the dear bishop." Vice-Principal Liddon had an insinuating manner, which prevailed with himself but not with many others; and as to making things easy for everybody, and being "all things to all men," he was scarcely a whit behind his master in this art, Bishop Wilberforce. He was a pleasant lecturer; and, with an air of most complete candour, he would,

in support of some crotchet of his own, give a reference which, on being tested (this rarely happened at the time, as what the Vice-Principal taught was taken on faith by his hearers), would be found to teach what was difficult to reconcile with H. P. Liddon's explanation of it. It was so characteristic of his "trimming" habit of mind, for him to join Dr. Pusey in declaring that if "the use of the Athanasian Creed were made optional," or if "there were any tampering" with it, he should be . . . "forced to reconsider his position." lame and impotent conclusion! At the college he was a fine preacher; his sermons were admirably delivered, with all the force of genuine conviction, and invariably with such dramatic action as would have been natural to a French, Italian, or Spanish preacher.

The Principal of Cuddesdon College, who became afterwards Archdeacon Pott, was a kindly little man, with a wife and family, quite the type of a highly respectable High Church clergyman. He was smilingly patronised by "the Vice," and regarded as "safe," and useful, by the many-sided Bishop Samuel. Just before I went up to Cuddesdon there had been a kind of Ritualistic epidemic which had broken out in coloured vestments and a collegiate "Office Book of Hours." An evangelical clergyman of the diocese, a Mr. Golightly, got hold of this and came down so heavily on the bishop and his Cuddesdonites that, after a commission of inquiry which

created a considerable stir at the time, all "illegal ornaments," including some handsome "vestments," had to be stowed away out of sight, and, at the time I speak of, the service books used in the small chapel, or rather oratory, contained nothing so flagrantly at variance with the decent order of Common Prayer as to warrant any further interference from an aggrieved ultra-Protestant.

It was during the summer vacation, while I was at Cuddesdon, that I made a six weeks' tour abroad, doing Belgium, the Rhine, and Switzerland, travelling third-class by train, and never riding or driving when I could walk ; stopping in the cheapest rooms at the best hotels (the prices nothing like what they are nowadays, when they have gone up with the height of the buildings), and, possessing only the merest smattering of French, and no knowledge whatever of German, I enjoyed myself in so free-and-easy and so simple a manner as I have never, no, absolutely never, been able to do since that time.

I was fortunate enough to make friends with a most hospitable English family,—father, mother, two daughters, charming, and a son,—who invited me to accompany them on all their trips ; also, over an evening pipe and a tankard of beer, I established relations with a courier, in charge of a party, who put me up to enjoying myself in the best way at the most moderate cost, and gave me a line of route and introductions to certain landlords with whom he was on

most friendly terms. What was my luggage? A portable valise and a knapsack. Not a single thing more. No dress clothes : my dependence was solely on Providence and the washerwoman ; for the most part an out-of-door life, with chance companions of various nationalities. Being a theological student of Cuddesdon, preparing for "Anglican Orders," I felt a natural curiosity to learn as much as I could of the ways of the Catholic clergy abroad, as, of course, according to *our* theory (the Liddon and Pusey one), we of the Anglican Church were always putting forward our claim of "belonging to the same body," which, on the other hand, would be naturally considered, to quote the well-known form of advertisement, an "untradesmanlike falsehood." However, although *en voyage* I accepted friendly pinches of snuff with some travelling *cure* or *vicaire*, my conversational powers, in consequence of my poor equipment of languages, were confined to addressing them in Latin ; but as their pronunciation differed entirely from mine, mutual understanding was difficult, except when question and answer were reduced to writing, which soon became irksome. The clergy I met seemed to be very homely, snuffy, and stuffy people, not to be mentioned in the same sweet breath with our neat, dapper, academical and excessively cleanly English clerics, whether married or single. So I returned to Cuddesdon filled with the idea of getting ordained as soon as

possible, marrying a charming young lady (of course, a devoted High Church wife), and settling down in the living in which, as I understood that my cousins had refused it, I could at once be placed by the holder of the presentation.

I studied hard : went at it with a will. Suddenly, a difficulty. Vice-Principal doesn't explain it satisfactorily ; Principal doesn't explain it at all. Unsettled. Another difficulty : men are going on for ordination, and I read the oath that every candidate has to take. I am faced by "the Royal Supremacy." Still more unsettled. Explanations hopelessly unsatisfactory. The "Black Rubric" stares me in the face. On posers' heads posers do congregate. They increase and multiply : Principal and Vice-Principal helpless. *Quo tendimus? In Latium?* No ; in my own opinion, most decidedly not. I was sure my difficulties could be answered and my doubts dispelled ; but by whom ? That was the question, and the answer given to it by Principal and Vice-Principal was "By Benson." Their advice was "Go to Mr. Benson."

Now this Mr. Benson of Cowley, long afterwards known as the originator of the "Cowley Fathers" (and himself recognised everywhere as "Father Benson," powerful preacher and "missioner"), was giving the students some sermons in our college chapel. Personally, this eminently respectable clergyman bore at that time (and I have never seen him

since) a curiously weird resemblance to the "Rev. Mr. Stiggins," the "shepherd" of Mrs. Weller's worship. His style of oratory was very effective with the majority, among whom I never could reckon myself. However, having been recommended to "go to Benson," to Benson I consented, willingly, to go. It was confidently supposed that Benson would throw light on all my difficulties. I may here pause for a moment to mention that on the only night I remained in his village, where I put up at the old-fashioned inn,—I drove there from Cuddesdon, being so admonished by the Principal and Vice-Principal,—Mr. Benson kindly made me free of his theological library, whence he hoped I would take any books I might require to read on the all-engrossing subject. Now at that time, although to me, as to everyone else, the name of John Henry Newman was "a household word," I had never read one single line of his writings. After Mr. Benson had quitted me to attend to his parochial duties, having directed my attention to certain well-known "Anglo-Catholic" works, and before I had been a quarter of an hour alone in his library, one book on the table attracted, nay, forced itself on my attention. It seemed to say "*Tolle, Lege.*" And I took it up. *Newman's Doctrine of Development!* I opened it: it looked dull, dry, unattractive. I shook my head, put it down again, and resumed my search for the books and treatises that worthy Mr. Benson had left for my

instruction and enlightenment. One after the other I removed them from the shelves and replaced them. I was fascinated by the dingy-looking book on the table bearing the magic name of Newman, and finally yielded. I took up the book, added a few others to it, so as to give myself a chance in case I had erred in selection, and then, at about three in the afternoon, I returned to the inn, made myself as comfortable as possible in an old-fashioned sitting-room, with a good fire, where, except for a short interval of about half an hour for dinner, I set myself to read Newman's work steadily and carefully. I was like the good St. Anthony in the profane song, who

“kept his eyes

So firmly fixed on his old black book,”

that nothing disturbed me, and if I paused for a few seconds to light a pipe and to take some coffee (I affected neither wine nor spirits in those temperate days), I made up for the loss of time by increased attention to the business in hand. So it came to pass that as I did not leave the house in order to call upon Mr. Benson, my reverend and kindly host, thinking that something might be wrong, came over to the inn to inquire about his *protégé*.

He did not cause his arrival to be announced, but entered the room. Becoming aware of the open door, I looked up, and then I saw standing away in the gloom a dark-robed figure, whom, on,

raising aloft one of the inferior wax candles supplied by the inn, I ascertained to be the Rev. Mr. Benson, who had glided almost noiselessly on to the scene like "Margaret's grim ghost." I at once rose to receive him respectfully, when it suddenly occurred to me that judging from the severe glance with which he regarded my pipe, he considered smoking as a step on the downward and broad path. At once I apologised for my indulgence in tobacco, and wished that I had been less absorbed in my studies, so that I might have forestalled his visit to me by calling upon him. Courteously he waved aside my pipe and advanced towards the table. The books of his choice were lying on it untouched; the book of *my* choice was in my hand.

"You have been reading that work of Newman's?" he asked grimly.

Yes I had.

"It was not one of those I selected for you," he continued, severely sad.

No; I admitted it was not. "It is, in fact," I went on somewhat nervously, foreseeing trouble ahead, "one that I chose for myself." Then I added apologetically and reproachfully, "It was on your study table, Mr. Benson."

"Indeed!" he said, apparently much astonished; evidently he did not remember having placed it there; nor did he seem to have any recollection of having recently consulted it.

Then he lectured me upon the errors of Newman, and of the serious consequences of adopting this "theory of development," and following it out to its logical conclusion. He was most impressive, in delivery and in action. But—he left me untouched. Nay, strangely enough, the more powerfully (always in voice and manner) he argued against Newman and against Rome, whither he saw, but I didn't, that I was tending, the more convinced I gradually became that Newman and Rome were absolutely right. And so firmly impressed was I at the end of his controversial address by this conviction, that I do believe had a Catholic priest walked in and said to me, "Now, sir, will you be a Catholic *hic et nunc*?" I should have replied, "Why, certainly." But as this dramatic episode did not occur, and as Mr. Benson paused for breath and evidently expected some sort of reply from me, or that, at least, I should put forward some argument which he would proceed at once triumphantly to demolish, he was very naturally taken rather aback when I felt myself compelled to candidly own that I had no remarks to offer on the subject, except I said that, "as far as I understand the matter"—I hesitated diffidently enough at this point, and then blurted out, "*I entirely agree with Dr. Newman.*"

Fancy! "Ditto to Dr. Newman!" There is a ridiculous side to the most serious incidents. The humour of this scene, as I considered it afterwards,,

was delicious! We were both earnest enough at the time, and I doubt if the Rev. Mr. Benson ever did really perceive its humorous aspect. But imagine the two! The gaunt, spectacled clergyman wrapped in so prodigious a cloak that, when he raised his arms, it gave him a vampire-batlike appearance of out-spreading wings which would bear him aloft previous to his swooping down on and transfixing his victim (me), was something weird and uncanny. He gave me up as lost, a veritable son of perdition; and raising his lanky arms and bony hands, towards the ceiling, he violently denounced me. "Denounced" is a mild word; it was simply nothing but an anathema pronounced in severest ecclesiastical phrase, — English, not Latin. He meant it to be terrible, he meant to frighten me back into what he considered the right path, and to deter me from Rome. I do not know whether he expected me to wither away on the spot, or to kneel down and writhe in agony, while imploring him to withdraw his awful words; all I do know is that "I was not a penny the worse"; and politely bowing to him, I simply expressed myself sorry that I should have been the cause of his losing his temper, and so wished him cheerfully "good-night." He made a somewhat ineffective exit, as of course he ought to have gone out on the last word of the curse, and have disappeared in the darkness of the passage. However, the point was, that he went; and so left me in peace to continue

my study of *The Doctrine of Development*, which I read far into the night.

The next morning I attended his early service, "just to show there was no ill-feeling" towards him on my part; and, after breakfast, he himself reappeared in my room and tendered me a manly and quite sufficient apology, which, as from an elder to one so much his junior in years and experience, was indeed a most generous thing to do. He said he had spoken in his wrath, and had said too much. Of course I interposed with "Oh, not at all," but nothing would satisfy him but that I should understand how he quite withdrew his anathema, and how therefore I should, so to speak, leave the court without a stain on my character.

We shook hands. He (bless him for a Retractarian!) wished me well; regretted the inevitable; said he would write to the Principal of Cuddesdon, whither I presently returned in order to spend a short time in packing up my few possessions (chiefly books), with which and with my portmanteau and about twenty pounds in my pocket — "my little all" — I went up to London.

Downright Mr. Benson was far better to deal with than the Bishop of Oxford, with whom also I had had a brief interview some little time previous to my visiting Cowley. His Lordship Sam Wilberforce was rotund, softly spoken, "washed his hands with invisible soap," as was consistent with his sobriquet,

"and imperceptible water," while talking to me in the most affable manner. The line he took, as far as I remember, was that, in comparison with the difficulties as I had stated them, how much greater were the difficulties elsewhere ; and then he addressed what he considered "comfortable words" to me with, as I may term it, since he looked upon me as a departing soul, "extreme unction."

I remember a story of Bishop Sam Wilberforce and the architect of his "palace" Cuddesdon. It was said, with what truth I don't know,—probably it was an invention of the enemy,—that the architect, one Arthur Pearson, or Penrhyn (or any name beginning with a "P"), obtained the bishop's leave to having his own initials carved on the stone-work on one side of the gateway, while the bishop's initials were to be on the opposite side. But when it was demonstrated to his Lordship that on one pillar of his palace gate would appear the initial letters of "Samuel Oxon," "S. O.," and on the opposite pillar those of "Arthur Penrhyn," "A. P.," his Lordship immediately withdrew his permission. It was already quite enough that the bishop's theological college should be under the direction of "a Pott with a Lid-on." These stories were current then, and are probably not yet forgotten. I do not give them as new, nor the "A. P." one as true.

CHAPTER XV

AMONG THE OBLATES — VISITING HOUSE — A SCENE — A FRIEND IN NEED — INTERVIEW — DR. MANNING — AN APPRECIATION — COMPANIONS — A WONDERFUL SERMON — AN OLD-WORLD CELEBRITY — PÈRE RATISBONNE — ANOTHER FUTURE CARDINAL — THE OLD SCHOOL — FATHER FABER — A DECISION — OLD STORY CORRECTLY RE-TOLD — FAREWELL TO ST. MARY'S

I SHALL not dwell unnecessarily upon this period as being the *via media* between my being "off with the old love and on with the new," when I gave up all idea of a snug Anglican parsonage, determined upon resuming my dinners at Lincoln's Inn and my attendance at lectures in the Temple, with a view to becoming a barrister more or less learned in the law. Between quitting Cuddesdon and settling down to legal study, I stayed at the House of the Oblates at Bayswater, then presided over by Dr. Henry Edward Manning, who, when I was temporarily homeless (in consequence of my having become a Catholic) and practically penniless, put me up for as long as I liked to stay, and, if I found the life

suited me, and discovered in myself a "vocation," Dr. Manning, who was kindness itself, would have received me into the company of the "Oblates of St. Charles Borromeo." In return for this timely hospitality, I, being fresh from college, undertook to impart such elementary classical knowledge as any youthful student among the Oblates might require.

But as I may fairly consider my first interview with Dr. Henry Edward Manning as the turning-point of my career,—I had just completed my twenty-first year,—I may be permitted to dwell, for a few moments, on the interval that preceded what was to me, certainly, the most momentous occasion of a lifetime.

My darkness having been unilluminated by any rays wherewith the learned lights of Cuddesdon could enlighten it, it occurred to me to write to Dr. Manning, of whom for years I, in common with everyone else, had heard so much. To him by letter I stated my serious doubts and difficulties. Within a couple of days his reply came: with it a small book, of which he was the author. His letter, without any waste of words, simply answered my questions clearly and straightforwardly; he begged to inclose a little pamphlet which might be of use to me.

Letter and pamphlet, practically, clenched the matter. I had made up my mind there and then, and never for one single second at any period of my



life have I repented of or regretted the step I then took.

I went home, meaning to acquaint my father with my determination. I was perfectly willing to wait, to agree to read, to learn, to digest and so forth, if that was the course to be insisted upon by paternal authority.

Nervously I descended from my cab. Somehow I did not like the subdued manner in which the butler, ordinarily smiling but now exceptionally grave, received me; nor did I look upon it as a cheerful omen, that, instead of taking my portmanteau up to my bedroom, he deposited it in the hall, and left it there. Then he informed me—

"Mr. Francis, your father will be down directly."

And therewith he ushered me into our dining-room.

This all looked ominous.

I had been in the room some ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, and was just beginning to wonder, as my courage was commencing to "ooze out," whether I had not better defer the interview until another day, when in came my father, like a whirlwind.

Temper! No—I never remember having seen anyone in so violent a temper. He held a letter in his hand, and when he could speak,—for he wouldn't even acknowledge my filial greeting,—he exclaimed—well—no matter—he was violent. I

trust the attention of the "Recording Angel" was momentarily distracted from this scene. He showed me a letter of about eight pages, written to him by Dr. Pott of Cuddesdon, of the purport of which I am sure he understood as much, or as little, as he did of the differences, and the distinction, between the Anglican-Protestant and the Catholic Church, that is absolutely nothing. For his was a case of "invincible ignorance," or as the Irish gossoon expressed it to Archbishop Whately, "inconsayable ignorance," if ever there were one, and his vocabulary, being fortunately limited, did not supply him with an epithet strong enough for him to apply to me. He calmed down a bit so as to read aloud the letter, which, as I found, told the truth without any undue bias; the only mistake made was in giving vent to a suspicion that I had been influenced by some one outside the college, meaning, perhaps, two or three of their former students who had become Catholics. However, this was a mere surmise, without proof, or any foundation whatever in fact.

The upshot of this most painful and trying interview was that my father, declaring I should never have a penny from him, and that I might go to, it mattered not where, for all he cared, flung out of the room, banged the door, and left me in the dimly-lighted dining-room.

I hesitated; should I follow and reason with him?

Should I see my stepmother and ascertain if she were willing to speak on my behalf? However, while *nulla revolvens*, in came the butler, sad but sympathetic, to ask—

“Should he get me a cab?”

That question settled the matter. Certainly, a cab, at once.

But—*where was I to go?*

For over a year and a half I had had very little indeed to do with London life. I was not the bold rover I had been, and, moreover, the amount of cash in my pocket was not only limited, but when that should be exhausted to whom was I to apply for a further supply, however small? In the circumstances I could not go to uncles, cousins, or aunts.

Suddenly I remembered my friend F. C. Wilson, a prominent member of the A.D.C., who had gone down from Trinity the year before me, and with whose address in London I was acquainted in consequence of having written to him during my last term at Cambridge, asking him to come up and stay with me in “the A.D.C. week” and play a part. If I remember rightly, he accepted and appeared there “for the last time” on that occasion. So, naturally, to his rooms in Conduit Street I went. He was not in, but would be soon. I deposited my incubus of a portmanteau. The maid rather thought he had gone to Farm Street Church,

in which case he would be sure to return soon after six o'clock, and, besides that, he was dining at home.

"Anyone with him?" I inquired.

Well it appeared dinner had been ordered for two, but she didn't know who the other gentleman was. "Would I," she confidently asked, "step up to Mr. Wilson's room and wait?"

I would, and I did.

Such a snug bachelor establishment! so luxurious, as it then appeared to me, after coming from the chill of my father's reception in the dim dining-room.

In a niche under a canopy in a corner of the room was placed a statue of The Madonna. There were flowers around it, above and at its feet, flowers in vases, and a light burning before it. I knew little of such matters, and this was quite new to me. I remembered that he had been given to ecclesiastical decoration in his rooms at Cambridge. But, personally, for the decorative externals of religious worship I have never cared out of their proper place. Still, I remember well how this arrested my attention. I was standing absorbed in meditation on recent events and recalling to myself scenes of our old friendship at Cambridge, when the door opened and in came Freddy Wilson, beaming with delight, and giving me such a welcome as would have made the greatest stranger feel absolutely at home there and then on the spot.

"I knew you'd come," he said presently.
"And"—

• "I am going to be a Catholic," I said.

He hadn't words; he hadn't tears; he was absolutely overcome with joy. He shook my hand heartily. Then, without speaking, we both sat down, opposite to one another, on either side of the fireplace.

Presently, breaking the silence, he told me why his first words had been, "I knew you'd come."

But at this point I stop. On some other occasion I may tell it all. I will only say, here, that he had had a strange presentiment of this very event, and, moreover, that it would happen on the 8th of December, or within a day or two of that date one way or the other. And so it was.

I pass on, as the foregoing was but the preface to my meeting the late Cardinal, at that time Dr. Henry Edward Manning, superior of the Oblates of St. Charles, Bayswater. I mentioned the fact of my brief correspondence with Dr. Manning to my friend, and he at once advised me to call on him.

"I know Dr. Manning slightly," said Fred. Wilson, "but sufficiently well, in the circumstances, to warrant my taking you up to Bayswater and introducing you to him."

I thanked him sincerely.

"In the meantime," he continued, "we'll dine

together and have a chat over old times. There's a spare room here, and you can make this place your home for as long as you like to stay." So a note was written to Dr. Manning; a reply was received next day, making an appointment for the evening.

Never shall I forget my first meeting with Henry Edward Manning, D.D., formerly Protestant Archdeacon of, as I think, Chichester, but at this time head of the Catholic Oblates of St. Charles Borromeo, a community of "seculars" serving the Church of St. Mary of the Angels, Bayswater.

Dr. Manning's appointment with me was for five o'clock on an evening in the second week of December, the date of which, I regret, has not been entered in my diary. I was to meet the man whose career was public property, who had been one of the burning and shining lights of the Anglican Church, and whose name, coupled with that of John Henry Newman, had been in the mouth of everyone interested in what had been originally known, in the earlier part of last century, as "the Oxford Movement."

In his reply to a letter of mine, Dr. Manning had answered all my difficulties, and I had nothing left to ask him. It was for him to finally decide on the next step.

Nervously, then, I inquired of the "brother" who opened the door, "if Dr. Manning expected me?"

The "brother" didn't know.

"The Father," he said, in language quite new to my ears, "was just going out. In fact, there was, at the door, the carriage that had been sent to fetch him."

Out of the dark December night, hazy with London fog, I saw the two carriage lights shining, and, dimly, the horses and coachman.

I hesitated. Should I call again? At what hour to-morrow? When the "brother" exclaimed—

"Ah! here is the Father."

And descending the steps, illumined by only one gaslight, I saw a cloaked figure, whose face was hidden by a broad-brimmed, low-crowned hat. It paused for a moment as the little porter, rendered still less by contrast, ran up the stairs and arrested his descent.

"Ah!" said Dr. Manning, removing his hat and inclining his head towards me as I bowed, "I have a few minutes to spare. Will you"—this to me more persuasively—"come this way?"

And turning, he ascended the steps, leading the way up another short flight into a wide corridor—I noticed nothing, except that the architecture was Gothic—at the end of which was a door; this he pushed open, and after the briefest possible pause, as if to ascertain whether there was anybody there, he beckoned to me, and made his way up towards the large fireplace of the plain Gothic hall which, as I found out afterwards, was the refectory. He motioned me to a chair on the right of the fireplace

as he seated himself on a bench on the opposite side. Then, with his right hand, long and thin, screening himself from the fire, he looked me full in the face. What a wonderful look! The thin sharp outlines of the features, the massive forehead, the broad bald head, of which the crown was covered by a skull-cap, called, as I afterwards ascertained, a *solideo*, because never raised except when in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, in fact the whole appearance of the man who had given up everything "for conscience' sake," so strongly impressed me that for a few seconds I was utterly overcome; not with visible emotion, but I had no words.

At once Dr. Manning put me at my ease. His summary of his own difficulties years ago, an expression of the deepest sympathy with mine now, and, not only with mine, but with those of all whom I was leaving at "the parting of the ways," at once won me. My doubts had been his doubts, my difficulties his difficulties, his course of action was to be my course of action.

And so within half an hour, for this momentous interview scarcely lasted so much, all was settled. Dr. Manning was deeply moved; his voice trembled as he gave me his blessing, and then, shaking me cordially by the hand, bade me good-night, swiftly descended the stairs and passed out.

I followed slowly, meditating; so far contented, for the end of my journey was in sight.

That was my first interview with Dr. Manning, afterwards Henry Edward, Cardinal, Archbishop of Westminster.

And then when I came to know him better, when after being received into the Church, he entertained me as a guest, permitting and encouraging me to serve a novitiate on trial, just to see if I had a vocation or not, how delightfully boyish he could be in moments of relaxation!

It delighted him to give us reminiscences of his youthful Oxford days, of how he rode to hounds, and was not an indifferent pugilist. He would throw himself into what Dickens has described as “a paralytic attitude,” supposed to be that of a scientific prize-fighter, and there he would “spar,” “letting out” with his long arms at his nephew, Willie Manning (then a novice at St. Charles’s), or at Walter Richards (now a D.D. and one of the gravest of school inspectors), or at Cyril Forster the youngest of the Oblates, then a lad of about sixteen, my pupil in classics, and enjoying his exercise amazingly. Those who did not know Dr. Manning like this did not Dr. Manning know. His private room was poorly furnished with the bare necessities; his cassocks were old; all his money, from first to last, went in charity (the Manning family were wealthy), and, when he died, I think the assets of this Cardinal Prince of the Holy Roman Church amounted to about a hundred pounds! A Liberal in the truest sense, he was in

sympathy with General Booth and with those honest Radicals who, without attempting to subvert existing Government, and without aim of self-aggrandisement, were willing to devote all their energies to benefiting the labourer who was "worthy of his hire" and those helpless poor dependent on him.

While at Bayswater my companion was James Marshall, once a Protestant clergyman, afterwards Sir James, Chief Justice on the Gold Coast. What an amusing time we had of it! He was told off as one "cantor" to lead the right-hand side of the choir of boys at Vespers, and I was the other. A nice pair! For Marshall, having only one arm, could with difficulty find his place, and keep it, in the book without assistance; while I, on the left, could never arrive at finding any places at all, and was either behindhand, or beforehand, or out of it altogether, except when a sharp choir-boy, well rehearsed in the varying psalms of the day, would prompt me in a whisper and put me right.

To this day my wonder is that we were allowed to continue in this office. I fancy it was hoped by the clergy that practice would make me perfect. Ah! but perfect—what? That is the question. It was not in my time, nor in Marshall's, and I never improved. Before quitting this very brief account of a brief story, I must record two things: the first is of the most remarkably short sermon I have ever heard in my life; and it was this:—

There was a Doctor Donovan (I think, but I have forgotten), who came from Rome, a thorough Irish-Roman ecclesiastic, and Doctor of Divinity. He was eccentric, and I fancy did not remain at St. Mary's any time, having money of his own, and a will of his own into the bargain. However, as long as he was nominally an "Oblate" (or one of the "Omelettes of St. Charles," as an old lady used to call them), he had to conform to the rules and take his turn in the pulpit.

His evening came. Beforehand he had been walking up and down the "ambulacrum" muttering to himself, evidently rehearsing, and therefore interrupted by no one.

In the evening, after a psalm or two and prayers, the choir sat down and the congregation subsided into quiet expectancy. Dr. Donovan issued from the sacristy, made his obeisance, knelt for a while before the altar, and then gravely, but with a most confident air, ascended to the pulpit. Then came the usual dedication, everyone making the sign of the cross.

"Ahem!" said the preacher, and paused.

All eyes were on him. His manner was most impressive. The choir and the clergy regarded one another curiously.

"Ahem!" repeated the worthy doctor, and fitted his gold-rimmed spectacles more securely on his nose.

Clergy and choir appeared absorbed in devout contemplation of the roof.

Congregation's eyes on the preacher who wasn't preaching.

Dr. Donovan looked amiably round, once more fitted his glasses, and then lifting his book, read aloud, in strongest possible Irish accent, the text on which he was going to preach.

So far so good. There were some who smiled, for the good doctor's broad Irish took them by surprise.

Then there was another pause, during which clergy and choir, tiring of the roof, turned their eyes towards the rotund figure in the pulpit. All attention was, by now, centred on him. He paused. He regarded the congregation. He seemed to be swallowing something with difficulty. Then he opened his lips.

"Me ~~death~~ thrun," says he emphatically, and stopped short.

Everybody listened eagerly. We were hanging on his lips ; but he didn't keep us long in suspense, for raising his right hand and making the sign of the cross, as is usual at the finish of a sermon, he said fervently—

"A blessing I wish ye all, *in nomine*, etc."

And so saying, after blessing everybody, he calmly descended, walked across the choir, genuflected, disappeared into the sacristy—and *that was all!!* No more sermon! The congregation were aghast. Was he ill? One of the clergy left the

choir to see if anything was the matter with him. Not a bit of it; indeed, scarcely had the priest, who had gone to inquire, left his seat than our worthy, "D.D." returned and took his ordinary place among the assistant clergy.

After the service, as we were re-entering the house, Dr. Donovan came up with Marshall and myself, and patting me on the back, said quite self-complacently—

"Well, Misther Burny,"—this was his abbreviation of my name,—“what did ye think o’ *that* for a sermon, eh? I fancy I gave it ‘em pretty strong.”

We were “in amazement lost.” He actually under the impression that he had been preaching a powerful sermon!

All we could reply was, “Well, doctor, it was too long,” with which he was immensely flattered. I do not remember his ever having been put on the preaching list again; indeed, I think, that soon after this he left the college and returned to Rome; unless, maybe, he was appointed as private chaplain to a deaf nobleman.

The other experience was a link with my past and with my future as it was to be when I had quitted the Oblates. One afternoon I was asked to accompany Walter Richards in showing a visitor over the church.

I went down and found my friend talking to a

short, stout old gentleman, with white hair, white moustache and beard. He was a pleasant man, with a jovial voice and manner. His eyes twinkled with humour. Walter Richards was showing him all over the church, explaining the pictures, statues, and altars, and the stout little man, much interested, was asking all sorts of questions. It appeared that he had not been long a Catholic; my own opinion, after learning his name, was (and is), that he had for years neglected his "duties," had become nothing at all, but later in life had returned to "his Father's house," after the manner of the Prodigal Son.

"My friend here," said Walter Richards, intimating me, "is very fond of theatricals," and then he told our visitor as much as he himself knew concerning the A.D.C., adding an opinion of his own as to my histrionic abilities, of which I had occasionally given evidence to him and others in our recreation time.

"Ah!" said the little man, turning to me, "I ought to have known you a long time ago." We were in the sacristy, where all the banners and processional crosses were kept. He scrutinised them critically, and then observed to me quietly, "Good 'properties' these, eh?"

This at once recalled the A.D.C. and all past theatrical days. I explained "properties" to Walter Richards, who was much amused. Then our round good-humoured little man went on to recount to us

how he remembered this, that, and the other, in dramas, and a good deal about "properties" and scenes and theatres, when, it suddenly occurring to him that perhaps the conversation was not altogether in keeping with the fitness of things, he pulled out his watch, observed he had no idea it was so late, asked Richards if he had his address, as in a few weeks he should return to reside in the neighbourhood, and should be a constant attendant at this church, but that he must now go; and so bidding us good-bye, Walter Richards showed him out by the sacristy door into the street.

"Who was that?" I asked.

"Eh?" exclaimed Richards, and then, as if much annoyed with himself, he said, "I thought I had introduced you, and I was wondering you didn't take to him more."

"Why?"

"Why?" reiterated Walter Richards, "why, that was Bunn, 'the Poet Bunn,' as he used to be called in *Punch*."

"Bunn!" Absolutely a household name to me when I was twelve years old! And this was Bunn, the librettist of *Balfe*! Bunn of English opera fame; Bunn, who had retaliated on those who had cruelly attacked him week after week in *Punch*, and had scored such a triumph at one blow, that he had never been attacked again!

Only once more did I see him. It was in this

same church, a few days after, devoutly praying in the chapel of St. Charles Borromeo. I lingered for a few moments in the hope of having some further conversation with him. But I fancy that with great fervour he was reciting the entire rosary from beginning to end, and, as duty compelled my presence in the house, I was reluctantly compelled to leave him at his devotions. I never had the chance of seeing him again.

And here a remarkable figure is recalled to my memory. It is that of a quiet, elderly, worn-looking French priest, with a sweet gravity of manner that attracted all of us younger students; he was a spare man, of middle stature, whose grizzled beard and moustache denoted either a monk or Eastern missionary. His appearance strongly impressed me, and, ~~moreover, this~~ was the first occasion of my seeing in England any exception to the close-shaven rule observed by all the Catholic clergy whom I had hitherto encountered.

We were in the *ambulacrum* ready for the community dinner at one o'clock, and only awaiting the arrival of Dr. Manning, who, a few minutes before the hour, descended from his room, bringing with him the guest above mentioned, to whom he at once, with greatest courtesy of manner, introduced the clergy one by one, all the while speaking in French. I noticed that every one of the Fathers bowed with the utmost respect to the foreigner, and

such of them as spoke French, or Italian, entered into conversation with him during the brief opportunity afforded them before the bell, sounding punctually at the hour, summoned us to the refectory.

"Do you know who that is?" Walter Richards asked me, as we took our places at the tail of the little procession.

"No," I replied; "who?"

"*Le père Ratisbonne*," answered my companion, evidently delighted at having been able to give me this surprise.

After this, it was with the greatest difficulty I could take my eyes off our guest. And no wonder. A long time before this date I had read the story of the conversion of M. Ratisbonne, as it was told, unsympathetically of course, in the newspapers, and although, naturally, the event had struck me at the moment, yet I had never given it a second thought, nor had I any ground for considering it as a matter that could be at any time of the slightest possible interest to myself personally. But during my stay with the Oblates I had come across a little book by M. le Baron de Bussièrès, giving the story of Monsieur Ratisbonne's miraculous conversion to Christianity, of which the writer of the above-mentioned work was an eye-witness, as he himself relates. To the Baron, Alphonse Ratisbonné, as earnest a Jew as was once Saul of Tarsus, had said,

"The sight of the Ghetto in Rome has rekindled all my hatred of Catholicism."

The fact of his elder brother having become a Catholic and a priest,—he was M. L'Abbé Ratisbonne,—had rendered his antipathy to Christianity still more violent. When I met Le Père Alphonse Ratisbonne at St. Mary's, Bayswater, he had been a Catholic some sixteen or seventeen years, during the greater part of which time he, the founder of the missionaries of Mount Zion, had devoted himself entirely to missionary work in the East.

What might have been the object of his coming to England I do not know. I saw him this once, and I well remember every one of us, as we bade him good-bye, instinctively kneeling and asking his blessing. We felt that his presence among us was one of ~~these~~ occasions which are far more rare than are proverbially "angels' visits."

I call to my mind, too, how silent we were for some time after he had left, and how Walter Richards and myself sat together without speaking a word, both of us wrapt in thought. However, routine work had to be done, and so we broke up our *séance*.

"We've been very silent," I observed to Walter Richards, with something of an effort.

"We have," he replied gravely, "but you see, my dear fellow, it isn't every day one meets a man who *has actually seen Our Lady*."

Another figure prominent among many stands out among my memories of this period. As we were taking post-prandial coffee, our "custom always of an afternoon" (certainly on *festas* if not on ordinary days), and were scattered about the room chatting, while Dr. Manning conversed with the elders, occasionally walking up to the different groups and, in his drily humorous way, taking a part in the conversation whatever it might be, a lay brother entered and announced a name that I did not catch. Following close at his heels entered a handsome ecclesiastic, bright-looking, fresh-coloured, with such long black curly hair as I had only seen represented in pictures of French abbés in the early part of 1800. This young ecclesiastic, in the prime of life,—I should say at that time not very much over thirty,—brought with ~~him into~~ the community room quite a breezy northern air; he was so fresh, so full of *verve*, so buoyant, that I could not for a moment imagine him to be a grave, reverend, and learned Doctor of Divinity, just arrived from Rome, from the Collegio Pio I think, and one among the seniors of the Oblates of St. Charles Borromeo. Yet it was so, and the *débonnaire* Doctor of Divinity who came in after the manner of "the bounding Achilles," when he lightly "stepped o'er the plain of the daffydowndillies," and who, impetuously kneeling to receive Dr. Manning's hearty welcome in the shape of a blessing, and then rising

quickly, plunged at once into the liveliest conversation with his chief and with the others gathered round him, was Herbert Vaughan, D.D., destined to be the successor of Cardinal Manning in his high office.

I did not see Dr. Vaughan until years afterwards. I was married and living at Edgware, and he was Principal of the College of St. Joseph's at Mill Hill. I shall never forget his kindness and active sympathy with myself and family during a period of sadness which does not enter into this record.¹

"His Eminence may call to mind that, soon after he was made Bishop of Salford, I met him on the platform of the Mill Hill station, and not knowing exactly what might be the proper etiquette to be observed when saluting him in his new dignity, whether I ought to kneel, kiss the episcopal ring, ask a blessing and so forth,—for, in the presence of any eminent ecclesiastic, I was always as nervous as Sidney Smith, who said "he invariably crumbled his bread on the table when he was dining with a bishop,"—I compromised the matter by putting the question to him thus, *tout court*,

"Well, and how do you like being a bishop?"

I remember his Lordship taking it most good-humouredly, laughing heartily, and replying that "on the whole he thought he was getting on very well." So he was.

¹ As I correct these proofs, I receive the sad news of Cardinal Vaughan's death at Mill Hill College, June 19, 1903.

SOME OLD-FASHIONED CLERGY 341

Forty-five years ago the representatives of the older Catholic clergy in England had very little in outward appearance to differentiate them from Low-Church parsons. Canon O'Neil and Mr. Tierney,—all "secular" priests were "Mister" then, and should be so now, as the title "Father" ought only to be given to "Regulars,"—and several others whom I saw at that time, men of about sixty years of age, wore either black stocks and no collars, or white ties and low waistcoats, and looked like well-to-do farmers on a visit to town, rather than clergy and dignitaries of the Church. They were very shy of using such names as "Oblates" or "Oratorians," regarding them, in England, as somewhat "new-fangled," and so preferred to speak of themselves as "Manningites" and "Faberites." *A propos* of this latter name I well remember Father Faber, Superior of the Oratory, a very portly man, with a most charming manner and delightful smile. His extempore preaching, his easy style and graceful, impressive action in the pulpit had, for me at least, a remarkable fascination. Except the Protestant preacher Robertson, of Brighton, whom I can just remember, Canon Liddon, and Cardinal Manning when at his best, I can call to mind no one to whom I have listened with such pleasure as to Father Faber.

I remember once breakfasting at Cardinal Wiseman's house in York Place. I knew it was the etiquette to kneel on one knee on being presented

to a Prince of the Church, and to kiss the ring on his third finger. For this ceremony I was prepared; I had thought it over; I had mentally rehearsed it. On entering the breakfast-room I saw a portly personage standing on the hearthrug, in a violet, or purple, cassock, and wearing a pectoral cross suspended round his neck by a gold chain. In a second I had made up my mind. "This," I said to myself, "is Cardinal Wiseman. Now for the genuflection and the kissing of his ring." So straight at him I went, head foremost, full butt for his portliness, and before he could make any show of resistance, I was on my knee in front of him, had seized his hand and kissed his ring, with such fervour as nearly sent its wearer backwards against the mantelpiece. "No, no, no!" I heard him feebly ~~remonstrating~~ as I staggered up on to my feet again, and I "heard a smile" from two or three ecclesiastics, who had followed me into the room, but who had reserved their salutations for the proper object, that is the Cardinal himself, who was standing apart in a recess by the window, chatting pleasantly with Dr. Manning. My humble obeisance had been bestowed on Monsignor Serle (or Searle), and being very much flushed and confused by this *contretemps*, when the real Simon Pure turned towards me, and bidding me welcome, extended his hand with the episcopal ring *en evidence*, I could only shake it very heartily, and hope his

Eminence was in the best of health ; which proceeding, as I need hardly add, caused such laughter at my expense, that the ice of formality was entirely melted, and we were all put at our ease by the kindly geniality of the thoroughly English cardinal. That is my unique recollection of Cardinal Wiseman.

• When the hour came that I was compelled to declare that I had no "vocation" for the priesthood, Dr. Manning was at first reluctant to let me go forth into the world and fight my way. The story of my interview with him, as I have seen in print, without any authorisation from me (and "how these things get into the papers" is a greater mystery to me than ever it was to Mr. Vincent Crummles), I will now tell plainly and clearly, without "extenuating aught or setting down aught in malice."

I had determined to leave the Oblates House. There was the Law awaiting me ; my dinners, so to speak, were half eaten already, and my terms almost all kept. Also I had already returned to dramatic writing, for, while coaching a pupil in Latin, I had been quietly making notes (after the manner of Gilbert Abbott à Beckett's *Comic History of Rome*) for a Virgilian burlesque. I remembered the A.D.C., and I thought that if all trades failed, surely I could try, as "a professional," my luck on "the boards," seeing that my career as an amateur had been a decided success. That after quitting

the hospitable Oblates, whose guest I had been for over three months, I must earn money, was evident, and it seemed to me that to "go upon the stage" was the shortest and least expensive way of achieving that end. Having settled this in my own mind, I had to thank Dr. Manning and his Oblates for their great kindness, and then take my departure. The only persons to whom I confided my intention were my friends, Walter Richards (now, I think, the "Very Reverend" and Government Diocesan School Inspector), Willie Manning (the Cardinal's nephew, long ago dead), and James Marshall, subsequently Sir James Marshall, Chief-Justice of the Gold Coast, who, all three of them, like the captain in the ballad of Billy Taylor, "Werry much applauded" my decision, and wished me good luck.

~~So to~~ Dr. Manning in his ascetic little room I went. The interview was decidedly a difficult one, not exactly painful; but he was disappointed in me, and I had a kind of feeling, when in his presence, that I was choosing a line in life very inferior to the one that he would have selected for me, but upon which only those who have a "vocation" can venture to enter. "Vocation," as most of my readers will be aware, in its special religious sense signifies being "called" to the priesthood or to a professedly religious life, whether it be that of a "secular" or "regular." The conversation between Dr. Manning and myself somewhat languished. I had nothing to

say. Dr. Manning thought a good deal; sniffed occasionally, as was his habit, at the same time moving his closed lips from side to side as if arguing with himself on both sides of the question. Then he spoke. He pointed out to me what I was renouncing; how afterwards I might regret it; how I had originally intended to be an Anglican clergyman, and how this idea of mine could only receive its full development by my becoming Catholic priest. There were several steps, it was true, and I should be yet some time before I received "minor orders" and proceeded to the subdiaconate. It would be three years or more ere I could be ordained priest. To decide so grave a question in haste was perilous. "Would it not be better to wait—to wait? eh?—and not to—decide too hastily?" Certainly he, Dr. Manning, would be the last to urge me to a step that was irrevocable, but between now and that particular time there would be, as he had pointed out, an interval of months, nay of years, for I was only twenty-one—"yes, exactly that—and any step now taken in a hurry—well—well—" and so forth. But I was firm. I believed that I was not acting hurriedly, *and I was absolutely certain that I had no "vocation."*

"Ah!" repeated Dr. Manning, raising his eyebrows, and nodding gravely towards the fireplace, in front of which he was now seated. "No vocation,—hem. It is a solemn thing; very solemn."

"But," I humbly and timidly ventured to object, for I was, I admit it, dreadfully nervous—"but, Dr. Manning, there are other vocations—not to the priesthood."

He looked round at me as if quite surprised. Then again regarded the fire musingly, nursing his knee.

"Other vocations?" he repeated, as if courting an explanation, either from me or the fireplace.

"Yes—there are," I replied, becoming hotter and hotter as approaching the "burning question," "there are—other vocations."

"Well, well," he murmured, stroking his chin; "and what," he asked, slowly dwelling on every word, as he resumed his swaying movement and addressing himself to the fire in the first place, and to me incidentally—"and—what—what—what—are—these 'other vocations'?"

I was taken aback. I knew what I meant. I knew that there was "the Bar," but I was equally aware that I could not hope to start there in my present penniless condition. Thus "cornered," I thought I could come out with what was in my mind at that time and so have done with it.

"I was thinking," I said tremblingly, and becoming hotter and more uncomfortable every second—"I was thinking"—

"Well—well," said Dr. Manning musingly, noticing my hesitation, but still taking the fire into

A VOCATION WITH A VENGEANCE! 347

our confidence as a third party to the interview.

"Well—you—were—thinking—go on—go on."

"I was thinking, Dr. Manning," said I, taking my courage with both hands, "of—of," then I came out with it desperately, plump, "of going on the stage."

I had expected that this declaration would have blown him out of his chair; but it didn't. It didn't stir him; it didn't move him. Still he sniffed, still he moved his mouth, still he slowly stroked his chin, and then once more resumed his confidential communications with the fire. He did not look at me; he occasionally looked across me at nothing in particular; but his glance skimmed me and took off the cream of decision. Presently he murmured—

"Go—on—the—stage—hem—" Then he inquired, always musingly, "And you call *that* a vocation?"

"Well, Dr. Manning"—I began.

"My dear boy," he interrupted, with a somewhat impatient sniff, "you forget what 'a vocation' means. When *we* speak of 'a vocation,' we mean a vocation to the priesthood."

I ventured to protest that I was not ignorant of this fact, and that I thoroughly appreciated its gravity, but he continued calmly and dispassionately to define with admirable emphasis and lucidity the nature of a vocation. I listened attentively. I agreed entirely: I was in perfect accord. All I wanted to explain was that I had not used the

word "vocation" in its highest sense. But Dr. Manning wouldn't admit the application of the word, as I had applied it, at all. I was becoming more and more nervous as I began to see that I should have to yield to the force of his reasoning, and should not be able, yet awhile, to decide for myself whether I had, or had not, a vocation. I was simply melting away; so were my arguments. At last he wound up by recurring to my expressed intention of going on the stage.

"My dear boy," he said, sniffing briskly, as if now he were going to clench matters *hic et nunc*. "Consider that the question of 'vocation' is one for the individual soul. It is to be regarded only in the light of what is best for the soul." Here Dr. Manning paused, sniffed, and nursed his right knee, clasping it ~~with both~~ hands. Then, rocking himself, in measured rhythm as it were, slowly forwards and backwards, he continued, in his playfully sarcastic manner, "Why, you might as well say—that to be a—a—cobbler—is a 'vocation.'"

Whereupon nervously inspired I blurted out, "Well—er—a—a cobbler has *a great deal to do with the sole*."

The situation was too much for even Dr. Manning's gravity. In vain he tried with his hand to hide his smile; the smile would spread, and did. But he shook his head as he rose from his chair, and so gave me to understand that our interview

was at an end. He raised his hand in benediction, and I knelt as he gave me his blessing. Then I went to my room; saw my friends; recounted the interview; and within a few days, after I had concluded the sale of my books (this is one of the "acts and deeds" in my life that I have never ceased to regret) to a professional purchaser (buying through my old friend the bookseller Dolman), I left the happy home at Bayswater, where often have I been since, "ever," like Joe Gregory and Pip, "the best of friends," though, alas! the Reaper with his scythe has been busy in the ranks of the Oblates of Saint Charles, and but two remain now of those who were in time of need so sympathetically kind, and generous to a fault; or to several faults and all mine. This deponent having given to the world the correct version of the foregoing oft-told tale "again urges on his wild career," and quits the sanctuary of the seminary in order quite alone and unaided, with two friends and no fortune, to fight the battle of life and work for daily bread.

CHAPTER XVI

UNCERTAINTY — FRIENDS — EDINBURGH — QUIN-
TIN TWISS—JOE ROBINS—LOUISE KEELEY—
MONTAGU WILLIAMS—MRS. KEELEY—TOM
PIERCE — FITZGERALD — GEORGE MEREDITH
—“PATER” EVANS—DUFF-GORDONS—FRED.
CHAPMAN—*ONCE A WEEK*—CHARLES KEENE
—MARK LEMON

TWO friends? yes; my old college friend F. C. Wilson, ever ready in those days to put me up in his luxurious bachelor rooms in Conduit Street, and another friend, a dear, good fellow, Charles Donne, whose father, William Bodham Donne, the erudite and accomplished Quarterly Reviewer, Licensor of Plays, intimate with all the literary and dramatic notabilities of his time, did everything for me at the starting-point. As for other friends, Cantabs or Etonians, I could not reckon upon a single one. It was not their fault, neither was it my misfortune. Since quitting Cambridge I had entirely cut myself adrift from all my old college companions, even from such as were going to be clergymen, as most of these chose Wells for their theological college, and I met only one Cantab

at Cuddesdon, and he left soon after my arrival. But the warm-hearted, cheerful Donne family supplied all my social needs. They were one and all of them genuine friends to me. Both they and Fred. Wilson would have willingly supplied me with funds had I needed it, but the sale of my books had left me with money in hand "sufficient for the present distress." With Charles Donne's brother, Captain Donne, recently returned on sick leave from India, and recommended to tour about England, I went to Scotland. In Edinburgh we took very reasonable lodgings, he doing a lot of reading, and I a lot of writing, proceeding with the Virgilian burlesque that I had commenced to outline during my stay at Bayswater.

At this time the theatre was in full swing under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham, "Edinburgh Wyndham," as he was subsequently styled in order to differentiate Robert from Charles Wyndham, who, at that time, could have been only a beginner on the stage.

Before leaving town I had come across Quintin Twiss, whose acquaintance, as I have already told, I had made during a long vacation tour, and who, having been proposed by me, had become a member, a famous acting member, of the Cambridge A.D.C.; our Q. T. being an Oxford man. He had got a snug berth in the Treasury, and rather looked askance at me as a sort of chap who was gradually "going under."

At his mother's, Mrs. Horace Twiss, Quintin had become acquainted with all sorts of musical, literary, and dramatic celebrities, and when I told him how I was thinking of going on the stage and was about to take a tour due north with Captain Donne, he, becoming at once deeply interested in my welfare, told me that a friend of his, one Joseph Robins, had just got his first theatrical engagement at T. R., Edinburgh, and that to him ("Joe being a thorough gentleman," I remember well his adding) he would give me an introduction. Certainly; the very thing.

So, finding myself in Edinburgh town, the next thing was to discover the theatre and then make the acquaintance, per letter, of the, at that time, rising comedian, Joe Robins.

Now I had never seen him; only heard of him. ~~All I knew~~ about him was that when Albert Smith and a party of amateurs produced an amateur pantomime, which was given at Drury Lane for some public charity, it was Joe Robins who had played clown, and of him it has been said, by all the elder critics, that never had there been such a clown since the days of Grimaldi! Dickens records this fact, too, in a note to *The Life of Grimaldi*, which he edited and prefaced.

But Grimaldis weren't required; the new style of pantomime and the new clown, the dancing not the waddling clown, had come in; the openings were becoming longer, and the comic scenes were being

gradually reduced. Had this been a *reductio ad absurdum* the public might have benefited. But the "*absurdum*" has long ago been taken out of the "comic business," or, if it does remain, then few among the audience stay to see it.

I looked in the play-bill for the name of Joe Robins so as to be sure that a visit to the theatre would not be time wasted, and having discovered the name I set off to find the stage door and present Quintin Twiss's letter.

Joe Robins happened to be coming out from rehearsal just as I was asking the stage doorkeeper where I could find him. "Here's Mr. Robins," said the M'Cerberus, and there he was, and plenty of him too.

A stout, good-humoured, twinkling-eyed, red-faced, clean-shaven, red-gilled, typical ~~royal coachman~~ looking sort of man was Joe Robins. He had been in some business and had come to grief. His friends had always told him that "he would make a fortune on the stage, he was so like Wright," the very eccentric and highly popular comedian of the Adelphi. And so he was, facially; and when he spoke he could imitate Wright to perfection. But after that—when he dropped Wright and gave us Robins—how we were all disillusioned!

On this occasion he was fairly genial, not immensely so, and forthwith began to lecture me on the difficulties the stage presented to a beginner,

and how he had such natural advantages in his comical "phisimahogany," as he termed (*more* Wright) it, that not everybody possessed, and how Wright himself used always to say to him when they met, "Joe, my boy, I shall cut you off with a shilling," on account of this close resemblance. Robins promised to do what he could for me, and in course of conversation, which on his part consisted mainly of his talking to me in an easy, off-hand, familiar manner of "Albert" and "Arthur" (the two brothers Smith), "Ned" Yates, "Tom" Holmes, "Old" Keeley, and many others of his literary and artistic acquaintance (and didn't I envy him! to know all these people and speak of them so freely, too!), it happening to crop up that I had been at Eton—I think this was *à propos* of Charles Kean—he asked me if I knew Montagu Williams.

"Why, he was at my tutor's," I informed him, rather surprised at the question.

"Well, he's here now, my boy," said Joe; "he and his wife are both playing."

"Oh, he's married, is he?" I asked, slightly interested.

"Didn't you know it?" exclaimed Joe Robins. "He married Louise Keeley, old 'Bob' Keeley's second daughter. Lucky chap, begad, sir." Joe affected this old style; always imitating Wright. "He's a great friend of Wyndham's, and he's the boy to put you in the right way if anyone can."

Somehow this sounded encouraging. If an old Etonian (Montagu had been a "Tug," that is a Colleger, considerably my senior, and a pupil of Cookesley's with me) could make such a start on the stage as this, wasn't it within the limits of possibility that I might do likewise?

I think I ought to pause here to recount how Montagu Williams, having fallen desperately in love with Louise Keeley, proposed to her in Dublin (I think when she was fulfilling an engagement and he was on tour with a "professional-amateur," Captain Disney Roebuck), where they were married. Mr. and Mrs. Keeley, in London, were left in utter ignorance of the event, for Louise, then, as afterwards, a fascinating little actress, inheriting the true *vis comica* of her inimitable parents, was earning her own living, and was an entirely independent young lady. The Keeleys were a specimen of a thoroughly united family as long as they never came together. Had Montagu Williams formulated a request to old Bob Keeley for the hand of his daughter, he would have been refused for certain, unless Mrs. Keeley had first intimated that she was against the match, when the odds were that Mr. Keeley would have championed the proposal. However, as it happened, both were "ignorant of this knowledge," and were not asked to "applaud the deed."

But Louise had her own peculiar way of managing matters. She was not going to keep her marriage a

secret ; not she ! So up she came to town, and, knowing that her mother was sure to walk down Piccadilly towards the theatre on a certain day at a certain hour, she stationed herself close to the entrance of the Burlington Arcade, and, before she had been there many minutes, Mrs. Keeley descended from her Brompton omnibus and commenced the rest of her *trajet* on foot.

Suddenly up stepped her daughter.

"Mamma !" cried Louise, pleasantly enough.

"Good Heaven, Louise !" exclaimed Mrs. Keeley, startled. "I thought you were in Dublin ! What on earth"—

"Mamma," said Louise, coming to business in a straightforward way, "I'm married."

"Good God !" exclaimed Mrs. Keeley, and straightway sat down, flop, on the pavement.

It was the action of David Copperfield's aunt in real life. The old couple were soon reconciled to the marriage, and "young Bob" (Montagu Williams was a Robert) soon became a great favourite with "old Bob," his father-in-law, the inimitable Robert Keeley.

My visit to Edinburgh resulted in a trial trip on the stage. It *was* a "trip" with a vengeance, and, to employ masonic language, "it proved a slip." Montagu Williams was working hard to promote his wife's benefit at the T. R., Edinburgh. What a start it would be for me to play in a farce with Miss Louise Keeley, "the fair *bénéficiaire* !" I had not been on

any stage since quitting Cambridge, and was very nervous as to accepting the magnificent offer. If I made a hit, why, there I was, with an engagement at Robert Wyndham's theatre! If I didn't—well, there I wasn't. However, before I had actually decided on the step, my name as "Tom Pierce" (under which I had always played at the A.D.C.) was announced in large letters on the bills. I was utterly astonished. I had never for one moment intended to appear as an amateur "star"! I think Montagu described me as "a distinguished amateur." I protested; but it was too late. The die was cast: so was the piece. I had to "mug up" the farce in a couple of days,—a farce I knew nothing at all about; to rehearse it without the slightest assistance from anyone except from Louise Keeley where her own "business" with me was concerned, and at the great disadvantage of not having played anywhere for over a year, and only seen one or two pieces. All I remember is that, before a crowded house, the performance came off and I came off too, not a "distinguished" but an "extinguished" amateur. That settled my professional aspirations. Henceforward to me "the pen was to be mightier" than the boards. As ill-luck would have it, an uncle and aunt of mine, with a travelling party on their way, after a tour, to London, stopped at Edinburgh that night, and saw the bill of the play displayed at their hotel. The name of "Tom Pierce,"

in the ordinary course of events, would not have attracted their attention or drawn them to the theatre, had it not been that unfortunately my Uncle Arthur was blessed with an excellent memory, and he said to himself first and to my aunt afterwards, "Surely I've heard that name before."

Then they considered and remembered having read one of my privately published and printed pieces "as produced at the A.D.C.," where their charming nephew was identified with "Tom Pierce." They sent for seats, but, as it happened, every place was taken. The "Ben" was a "bumper." They saw the report of the performance in the paper next morning, which was more than I did, as, not daring to look a newspaper in the face, I had hurried my companion off to the station, and, by the earliest possible train, we had left Edinburgh behind us. Scotland stood where it did, but the ex-amateur, Tom Pierce, having "left but his name" behind him, had resumed his own style and bearing, and F. C. Burnand had bidden farewell—a long farewell—to "Tom Pierce," who, in fact, was buried in Edinburgh. As Dibdin sings, to his readers,

"Even you, the story hearing,
With a sigh may cry—Poor Tom!"

"*Resurgam*" was not inscribed on his tomb, and the writer of these recollections has never heard of him since that most fortunate *fiasco*.

At this time, my finances being at a very low

ebb, friends in my need were friends indeed. Always had I a home at dear old Mr. William Bodham Donne's house, and a delightful host he was, full of anecdote; to know *him* "was in itself a liberal education." However, as about this time I had obtained from my father the concession of a small allowance (to which, as I afterwards learned, I had a fair claim) in consideration of my resuming dinners at Lincoln's Inn, which implied restoration on the road to the Lord Chancellorship, I could once again, like Mr. Micawber when in funds, "look my fellow-man in the face," and the first "fellow-man" I stumbled upon was an old college companion, whose "people" were on most intimate terms with the Donne family. This was Maurice Fitzgerald. He invited me to come and stay with him at Esher. As term time was over, and as there were, for the nonce, no dinners at Lincoln's Inn, and no lectures, and as I could now reckon on six pounds six shillings and eightpence, paid monthly, I accepted with pleasure.

"'Twas in the prime of summer-time," as the Eugene Aram poem commences, when I paid my first visit to Esher. As we walked across the common, Maurice expatiated on the beauty of the country, of the advantages of rural life over existence in town, talked charmingly, quoting classics occasionally, and, in fact, astonishing me, who only knew him as an unobtrusive undergraduate, an excellent

whist-player, very fond of a quiet game of "Cambridge Loo," and perversely preferring his own line of reading to that which was essential to obtaining a degree. He never entitled himself to add "B.A." to his name, and was not a penny worse for the omission. Maurice was a first-rate scholar, a gentle Sybarite, and a skilled *gourmet*. There was not a subject on which he could not speak well and wisely.

"I thought," he observed, breaking off in the midst of a vivid description of the beauties of the Box Hill and Dorking country—"I thought we should have met George."

"Who is George?" I asked.

"George Meredith," he answered. "I forgot to tell you that he is stopping with me, or I am with him. It doesn't much matter. We've been together for some time. You know him?"

No, I didn't.

"You know," Maurice put it to me inquiringly, "his *Shaving of Shagpat* and his poems?"

I regretted to say that, owing to my studies having been for the last year or more on subjects removed far away from modern literature, I had scarcely looked at any new books for the past eighteen months.

"Ah!" said Maurice reflectively; "you must read his *Richard Feverel*. I've got it and the others at home."

Then we saw a figure standing in front of a white

gate on our left, about a quarter of a mile distant, waving to us.

"There he is," said Maurice quietly (he was always quiet); "we shall meet him where the roads join at the corner."

As we neared the "crossways" (no "Diana" there as yet), George Meredith was shaking hands with a stoutish, jovial-looking, rubicund-visaged white-haired gentleman, who, if he had only been attired in gaiters might there and then have been easily taken for the original of Phiz's delineation of the immortal Mr. Pickwick.

George Meredith and this genial elderly gentleman waved their hands encouragingly to one another as the latter disappeared within the gate, and George strode towards us. George Meredith never merely walked, never lounged; he strode, he took giant strides. He had on a soft, shapeless wide-awake, a sad-coloured flannel shirt, with low open collar turned over a brilliant scarlet neckerchief tied in loose sailor's knot; no waistcoat, knickerbockers, grey stockings, and the most serviceable laced boots, which evidently meant business in pedestrianism; crisp, curly, brownish hair, ignorant of parting; a fine brow, quick, observant eyes, greyish—if I remember rightly—beard and moustache, a trifle lighter than the hair. A splendid head; a memorable personality. Then his sense of humour, his cynicism and his absolutely boyish enjoyment of mere fun, o

any pure and simple absurdity. His laugh was something to hear; it was of short duration, but it was a roar; it set you off,—nay, he himself, when much tickled, would laugh till he cried (it didn't take long to get to the crying), and then he would struggle with himself, hand to open mouth, to prevent another outburst.

Two more delightful companions for a young man, trembling on the brink of literature and the drama, it would be difficult to imagine. They were both my hosts. I was at home at once.

"Who were you talking to as we came up?" asked Maurice.

"That," said George—"why you've met him"—No, Maurice didn't remember—"that's Evans, dear old 'Pater' Evans."

And it was in this company, in these circumstances, that I first set eyes on Mullet Evans, second partner in the old publishing firm of "Bradbury & Evans," then known all over the world as "the proprietors of *Punch*." At this time they had among other ventures started *Once a Week* as a rival to Dickens's *All the Year Round*, and George Meredith was writing for this opposition his *Evan Harrington*. George scouted the suggestion that his novel should be called *Bradbury-and-Evans Harrington*.

Our near neighbours were the Duff-Gordons, at whose house George was a *persona grata*. As

Maurice did not affect society, and as I was "a person of no importance," neither of us, though formally introduced, was included in the invitations sent to George Meredith, then a rising star, by Sir Alexander and Lady Duff-Gordon.

• A far more congenial person to our Bohemian tastes was Frederick Chapman, who had taken a small house in the meadows by the little ~~river~~ Mole, not far from Cardinal Wolsey's tower. ~~Very~~ pleasant company we met there, and it was a delightful summer-time walk from Esher Common to this cottage. Through this association I obtained my first introduction to the Bowdrie Street publishers. Thus it happened. I had told George Meredith some stories which he found sufficiently amusing to warrant him, in placing them, told in his own inimitable language and style, before the public in the pages of *Once a Week*. Now George never informed me of his design, and made use of them without a "with your leave, or by your leave." It was after our trio at Esher was broken up that I found these stories of mine in *Once a Week*, whereupon, seeing a point to be scored for myself, I wrote to George, asking him as a set-off against the "honorarium" he had received for *my* stories ("only, infinitely better told") to recommend a story of mine to the editor. George replied, expressing his regret, excusing himself by saying

that he never thought I was going to make capital out of them (here he was right), and that he would have great pleasure in submitting my story to the *Once a Week* editor. *Ainsi dit, ainsi fait*, and my first appearance in magazine form was as the author of a story about a practical joke (its title I have forgotten), admirably illustrated by Charles Keene, whose acquaintance, years afterwards, I was to make at the "Punch Table." So George and myself cried quits. This introduction was of some use to me as acquainting Mark Lemon, who, as Mr. Punch's editor, was *au courant* with all the *Once a Week* affairs, with my name, of which indirectly, he was soon to hear from a totally different quarter. Mark Lemon, as he long afterwards informed me, had been very much amused by the story.

The Esher stay terminated. "We three" went our ways. Perhaps I may have something more to say as to Maurice Fitzgerald, about whom there are good stories not a few.

CHAPTER XVII

REST—NOVELTY—1858—THEATRES—LINCOLN'S
INN—ROBSON—*MEDEA*—*DIDO*—LACY, KING
AND CRAFTY—MY RIGHTS—MY WRONGS—
CHARLES YOUNG—CHATTERTON—WILLETT
—MISS WYNDHAM—ST. JAMES'S THEATRE—
FIRST NIGHT—FIRST PIECE—CRITICS—MAR-
RIAGE—TERM-KEEPING—H. J. BYRON—E. L.
BLANCHARD—KEELEY—MONTAGU WILLIAMS
—ROBSON AND EMDEN—OLYMPIC—THE
BENICIA BOY—FEATHERS IN CAP

FROM the time of my quitting Cambridge up to my leaving St. Charles's, Bayswater, I had not concerned myself with theatricals, nor do I remember during that period of twelve months ever having entered a theatre, or seen, or read, a play. Theatrical criticisms and notices were unknown to me then, and I had not been taking the slightest interest in anything theatrical, either professional or amateur. I corresponded with no one at Cambridge, and knew nothing whatever as to the doings of the A.D.C. after my retirement from the general management of its stage business. So when I returned to London the theatres were to me a

delightful novelty, and it was not often that I could afford to treat myself to a dress-circle seat, although the prices in 1858 were still moderate and the proportions of the pit, in most theatres, were not as yet reduced in order to convert the front rows into orchestra stalls. The Haymarket theatre was celebrated for its critical pit, while the pit of the Lyceum at Christmas time, when Madame Vestris produced one of Planché's extravaganzas preceded by a couple of farces of which Charles Mathews was the life and soul, was something marvellous to see, so jammed and crowded was it.

Lincoln's Inn dinners were early,—at five, I think,—and so it was quite easy for us "students," to whom "the play was the thing" for recreation, to be in the theatre for the commencement at seven. In what pieces I then saw Robson performing I am not sure, but of one thing I am certain, and that is that I never saw him play the burlesque of *Medea* until it was for a short run revived some considerable time afterwards. Ignorant of this I had, as I have said, hit upon a burlesque on the subject of *Dido*; perhaps I was taking revenge on the classics. At all events I wrote it, and Mr. William Bodham Donne, having sacrificed himself to the petition of his family on my behalf, and having actually read it in manuscript, having also heard many of its songs performed with solos and choruses by his domestic circle, most kindly undertook to show

it to "little Robson" when next he went to the Olympic. Even to appear to patronise burlesque must have been greatly against the grain with Mr. Donne, who never lost an opportunity of severely attacking this class of theatrical entertainment, though he invariably excepted Planché's classical extravaganzas from his otherwise sweeping condemnation. He thought, perhaps on account of its classical subject, that my *Dido* might be regarded with some slight favour; anyway he since wanted to "give me a lift," and to put me in the way of earning a livelihood.

Robson read it, liked it, but returned it with a message to its author, *per* Mr. Donne, saying "had he not so recently played *Medea* he would have been delighted to attempt *Dido*." So I retired to my bachelor lodging in Sidney Street, Fulham Road, where I was living very carefully on an allowance which I thought just sufficient, but of which Joe Robins, I well remember, emphatically expressed his opinion as being "d——d handsome," and the next day on my way down to the Temple lectures (it was during the October term time) I called in with the manuscript of *Dido* at 89 Strand, the theatrical bookselling shop, kept by one Thomas Hailes Lacy. Now I was well known to Lacy by name, not by sight, as when at Cambridge I had ordered all our play-books for the A.D.C. from him, I had recommended the club to purchase his series of plays,

about sixty volumes or more, and I had also confided the printing of my two farces, *Romance under Difficulties*, *In for a Holiday*, and my burlesques of *Villikins and his Dinah* and *Lord Lovel and Lady Nancy* to him, as he had undertaken to charge me nothing for printing, to supply us at Cambridge with such copies as we might want, and that he would also place them on his list. It cost me nothing; my vanity was gratified; and he was satisfied. It never occurred to me, verdant youth that I was, that he was not going to do this without the venture being well worth his while. So when I introduced myself to Mr. Lacy, who, in his dirty shirt sleeves, was muddling about with books and papers in a very ill-lighted and grimy shop, he welcomed me and shook hands in the heartiest manner. It was over a year of course since he had had any play of mine, and it now struck me that he might like to purchase those he had printed, and at the same time he could, an' he would, give me advice as to how to get *Dido* on to the London boards.

After some consideration with his spectacles on the top of his head, and after rumpling his hair in order to stimulate his brain-power, he looked at me craftily, and said, while examining the manuscript of my burlesque—

“Um—I’m afraid there’s not much chance—but I’ll read it and let you know.”

I told him Robson’s opinion of it.

"Oh, *he's* seen it, has he?" he observed in a discouraging tone. "Um—well—I'll read it." And it disappeared into a drawer. Then I thought I would approach the delicate subject of money; so very diffidently and with some nervous circumlocution, the object of which was quite apparent to this astute old stager, I inquired whether he would be inclined to purchase outright those pieces he had printed me in the halcyon A.D.C. days, when neither ~~the~~ nor money was of any particular importance to the present visitor, as, if so, I should be glad to ~~sell~~ them there and then, being, "not to put too ~~fine~~ a point upon it," confoundedly hard up.

He deliberated. He didn't say "no thank you" right out; there was some comfort in that. He put his hands in his pockets, and after rattling some money in an irritating and, to ~~so~~ impecunious a suitor as I was, a somewhat tantalising manner, he said—

"Well, you know, I printed 'em for you for nothing." I admitted the fact, gratefully. "I shouldn't have done that unless I had considered there was some promise in them" (if he had said "performance" instead of "promise," he would have been nearer the truth, as I afterwards discovered).

"For amateurs," I humbly suggested.

"Yes," he replied cautiously, as if debating the probable "profit and loss" account of the venture; "I can put 'em on my list for amateurs, of course

—well—I don't mind"—this with most provoking hesitation—"buying the lot." (O joy! O rapture! O my profit-propheysing soul! this was better than "my uncle.") "What do you want for them?"

Now here was "a facer." I hadn't the very smallest idea of their marketable value. In my ignorance, and in my modesty, I was compelled to say, with deferential politeness, that I would leave it to him.

Once more he hummed and ha'd, and again performed a fantasia on the keys and coppers in his breeches' pockets. Then he observed that "he couldn't be buyer and seller too," which struck me as a very fair and honest remark, besides being one that left me exactly where I was before it was uttered.

There were four plays—two farces, two burlesques. There was, Lacy pointed out to me, the cost of printing and so forth; and that is about as far as I got in my calculations. It never occurred to me that amateurs *would pay fees for performances*; it never occurred to me that professionals *would pay fees to Lacy for performing such plays on his list* as stood apart and separate from those on the list of the Dramatic Authors' Society, where the value of plays was assessed at so much an act. In fact I was a total greenhorn in such matters, and I thought, judging from the grimy appearance of the shop, that the theatrical bookseller only made a small and hardly

earned profit out of the sixpenny plays he sold over the counter. That being so, when, on my being totally unable to name a price for the lot, Lacy suggested that, without seriously injuring his own family or absolutely forcing himself to retire to a workhouse, he might venture on the risk of giving three pounds apiece for the copyright of the four plays, I accepted readily, and gladly signed a deed, which, curiously enough, was forthcoming on the instant, making over to him all my rights, whatever they might be. Then from his grudging hand I received the cash, which, being pocketed, I went my way elated and rejoicing. For was it not the first money I had earned by dramatic composition? But how far greater would my satisfaction have been had I then received a fair proportion of the amount that these early efforts of mine *had been earning in provincial theatres ever since Mr. Lacy had first printed them two years before?* These plays of mine were on "Lacy's List," and could be played by the country companies—not travelling companies alone, but regular companies at well-established provincial theatres—for a less sum than was charged by the Dramatic Authors' Society for their pieces. Consequently, as the song of "Villikins and his Dinah" had been rendered popular by Robson, so my burlesque for four principal characters, yet admitting of development in super and chorus department, was a sure attraction at a

considerable number of country theatres. The fees for these performances had already found their way into Mr. Lacy's pocket, and he had been only awaiting my making the rights, acting rights, past, present, and future, with the copyright, over to him in order that his claim on the fees from the very first might be undisputed. Instead of his giving me three pounds apiece for them, to have given me fifteen pounds *on account* of country performances would have been nearer the mark. It was a long time ere I made this discovery; and I suppose that Lacy thought he had sufficiently condoned his sharp practice by taking my burlesque of *Dido* and doing his best towards placing it on the London stage. It was not long ere I received a letter from him, asking me to call on him at 89 Strand. I did so. He introduced me to Mr. Charles Young, the leading comedian at the St. James's Theatre, then under the management of Messrs. Willert and F. B. Chatterton, with Miss Wyndham as directress.

Charles Young had come over here from Australia, and happening to be on the lookout for such a burlesque part as Robson would have played, *Dido* offered him exactly what he required. He had read it to the management. Miss Wyndham also had read it. The decision was in its favour; and if I would call on Messrs. Willert and Chatterton at the St. James's Theatre, terms could be settled there and then. Need I say I jumped at the chance.

I called, and was introduced to the joint proprietors in a side-room, on the ground floor of the theatre. Willert was an abrupt-mannered man, with rather a cast in his eye (very appropriate this for a theatrical manager); Chatterton was a stout, light-haired, thick-speaking individual, occasionally a trifle deaf, that is whenever he wanted a few seconds for considering his answer to your question. They came to the point at once. They "liked the piece," and so forth. They were prepared to give me "twenty-five pounds down" (what a temptation in that word "down"!) for the first twenty-five performances, and then a pound per night for the remainder of the run. Needless to say I closed with the terms, which were better than I, absolutely a novice in such matters, quite alone, and with not a soul to advise me, could have devised.

Since these early days, and since my many experiences, I have, whenever the opportunity offered, invariably advised a young and inexperienced author as to the terms he ought to make. But to proffer advice now is useless; never have I for the last twenty years come across a commencing dramatist, in the very earliest stage of cutting his first drama, who was not quite prepared to propose such terms as would stagger a manager, and to accept such modifications as, if the piece were successful, would if properly invested insure him a competence for life, while subsequent successes would provide him

with all the luxuries that a healthy, wealthy, and wise man could desire. But never, "in the whole course of my professional experience," have I come across one author, with his first marketable piece, so utterly "green" and so friendless as I was at this time. "Friendless" except for the Donnes; but concerning the prices that dramatists asked and received, Mr. W. B. Donne knew little, and could not have advised me. Naturally enough I was too eager to "sign, seal, and deliver" on the spot to risk my chance by searching for advice.

What I did not know at that time was that to Mark Lemon, first editor of *Punch* and my future kind friend, had been given this burlesque of mine by Miss Wyndham, who often consulted him (as I found out afterwards) on theatrical matters, and that by his advice she had accepted it, and had cast herself for the part of *Anna, sister of Queen Dido*.

Oh, those first rehearsals! What a novelty! What a delightful time! Fascinating, clever, and charming Miss Wyndham! Elegant and attractive Miss Murray, whom I had seen playing in the "legitimate" drama with Charles Kean at the Princess's, and who afterwards married that most amusing of amateurs, Sam Brandram, one of the very best of all the professional brotherhood of "reciters."

We began our rehearsals in the last week of January, 1860, finished in the second week of

February, and on the 11th *Dido* was successfully produced.

Never shall I forget the morning after, the *première* Sunday, when my host, Fred. Wilson, at whose rooms I was staying, bought the Sunday papers. • We had been so "happy and glorious" after the great success of Saturday night, and then "what a fall was there" on Sunday morning!

The critic who "slated" me most fiercely was Edmund Yates in a Sunday paper (I forget which it was, probably *The Observer*), and the next day he repeated the slashing in the *Daily News*. Someone had told me how Yates had spotted a strong Cambridge contingent of A.D.C. men and personal friends, who overdid the applause, and whose boyishly warm-hearted but injudicious conversation in the lobbies, and as they left the theatre, had been overheard and resented not only by Edmund, but also by not a few pressmen, and by some established writers of burlesque, who regarded me as a "cocky young university man," and a kind of amateur interloper. The professional critics, who at that time hung together (I could have hung them all together, and strung them up with pleasure) more than is their wont nowadays, and used to foregather after a "first night" at the Arundel and such-like Bohemian clubs, of whose existence I was at that time totally ignorant, were more or less hostile towards me as interfering with the business of

Frank Talfourd, Planché, the Brothers Brough, Leicester Buckingham (himself a critic), Kenny, Byron, and some others of their *confrères*. Not one single critic among them did *I* know; not one of them *knew me*. I was totally unacquainted with journalism; and in the theatrical world I knew only the managers and company of the St. James's. I had to fight my own battle, absolutely alone, and I was quite willing to do so. And what happened? *Dido* ran for nearly eighty nights (a hundred nights was then quite exceptional), and I found that, though the remuneration was not great, I had distinctly made a fair start as a dramatic author.

By the following Easter, my prospects being bright, I had married and settled, still in Sydney Street, where I remained until we found a countrified-looking little place in Park Walk, Fulham Road,—anything but countrified now,—and “set up” for ourselves; my time being divided between writing for the stage, attending lectures in the Temple, and “keeping” the last of my terms by attending the dinners at Lincoln's Inn.

Soon after the production of *Dido* I went into Lacy's for some play-book, and waited to speak to the proprietor until he had finished a conversation in which he was engaged with a tall, slight young man, rather pale (I could just see his profile), who was leaning against the counter, stroking and pulling at his moustache while listening to Lacy, who, however,

on seeing me, broke off in the midst of his eloquence, and said—

“Ah, Mr. Burnand, I don't think you know Mr. Byron—Mr. H. J. Byron?” and he indicated the tall gentleman, who, turning towards me in the friendliest manner and with a peculiarly whimsical smile, shook hands with me, congratulated me on *Dido*, and expressed himself as greatly pleased at making my acquaintance. It was a proud moment for me when the most popular burlesque writer of the day, whose works, bristling with puns, sparkling with witticisms, and ringing with the pleasantest tunes, spoken, sung, danced, and acted by one of the best, if not the very best, burlesque company that ever trod the boards of the Strand or of any other theatre, congratulated me on my success, and encouraged me in my work.

“Are you a member of the Arundel?” he inquired.

“No, I was not.” I had never heard of the Arundel. Oh, he would propose me. Who would second me? Did I know Blanchard? or Palgrave Simpson? No, I knew absolutely nobody. I knew their names, of course. And then, as luck would have it, who should come in, as “if to a cue,” but dear old E. L. Blanchard, one of the gentlest of clever critics, who for years distributed his work over *Era*, *Daily Telegraph*, and other papers of all sorts and sizes, London and provincial, the kindest-mannered man that ever murdered his aspirates.

What Blanchard did not know in theatrical life, and in journalism generally, was not worth picking up.

Certainly he would "second" me for the Arundel, and he would take me to several merry gatherings of authors, actors, and pressmen; and as Byron was staying for a business conversation with Lacy, E. L. Blanchard, whose way lay Fleet-Streetwards, accompanied me to Chancery Lane, all the way talking cheerily, and letting me into some of the mysteries of press-craftsmanship. I complained to him of (as I considered it) the cruel slashing my piece had received at the hands of some of his brother journalists. He laughed lightly; observed it was nothing; that "if the piece was going well what did it matter?" and significantly added—

"You see, my dear boy, if you only *knew* these chaps" (mentioning them by name) "you would find them quite different. However, you'll meet them all at the Arundel."

Blanchard for many years had written the pantomime for Drury Lane, and I rather think for Sadler's Wells also. He was known as "the hero of a hundred pantomimes."

Before we left Sydney Street, Montagu Williams and his wife had come to live in Brompton, so as to be near his wife's family, the Keeleys, who were then living in Brompton Square. Mary Keeley had married Albert Smith, who was still giving his entertainment of *Mont Blanc* at the Egyptian

Hall, while she was playing in a burlesque of Sardanapalus and in farces at the Adelphi; and Louise Keeley, her sister (Mrs. Montagu Williams), was also making considerable way in her profession at the Princess's, at the Haymarket, and, I fancy, at the Olympic.

Montagu Williams was doing nothing in particular; at least, like myself, he was attending law lectures and keeping his terms at the Temple, as I was doing at Lincoln's Inn. Anyway we foregathered. After a brief but varied career as an usher in a school, as an officer in a line regiment, and as an actor, amateur and professional, having married into the Keeley family, he and his wife soon found themselves on the friendliest terms with most of the "heads of the profession" in London, and it was a very easy matter for "Bob" Williams to get the *entrée* to any theatre, or to any manager's sanctum, with an introduction from the other Bob, his father-in-law, Robert Keeley.

One day, not so very long after the production of *Dido*, and during its run, Montagu Williams came to me bursting with an idea. He literally gasped with excitement.

"What is it?" I asked.

"The Benicia Boy," he blurted out excitedly. Everyone was talking about this celebrated prize-fighter, who was coming over, or who had come over, to meet the English champion, Tom Sayers.

"I've got a first-rate idea for a farce!" he cried. Then he told me what fun must come out of the notion of some harmless person, in a farce, being mistaken for the redoubtable pugilist.

"Your father-in-law is the man for it," I said at once, but this was, I found, impossible. I forget whether he were "resting" or had retired, but I do remember that when we had hit on our plot and had written the piece, Mr. Keeley said he wished such a farce had been offered to him in his best days.

We set to work. I incline to the opinion that we both of us went to our "lecture" and our "dinner" during the day, that I returned early, and that Montagu came to me about seven in the evening; and that there and then we began our work, one walking and talking and the other sitting and writing, alternately, until, at about four o'clock in the morning, the farce was finished. Before midday, Montagu had taken the manuscript to Mrs. Keeley, who, having read it, and being delighted with it, went straight off, manuscript in hand, to Messrs. Robson and Emden, who by the following day had accepted it, paid for it (alas! a miserable sum! why didn't Mrs. Keeley tell her son-in-law what to ask for it! So after all I hadn't much to complain of as to lacking friends when I priced *Dido*), and it was immediately put into rehearsal at the Olympic Theatre.

I shall never forget Robson's rehearsing. The

farce played about "forty minutes" (so registered in printed copy), but every rehearsal occupied us, at first, during a full three hours, that is from eleven till two.

Robson, the funniest and roundest little figure, with large head, tiny hands and feet, with the brightest smile and a merry chuckle in his voice, invariably arriving late, would proceed to explain how it was he had not come punctually, and this was cut short by his partner in the management, Emden, who was not unlike the "early" D'Israeli in face and in ringlets, and was a spare man with a decided and business-like manner.

"Of course, get to business," assented Robson, becoming all at once overpoweringly in earnest.

He stood with us, the authors, on the stage with his back to the pit. Emden was stage manager.

We commenced. Mrs. Emden began, and everything would be going on smoothly, when Robson would suddenly exclaim—

"Stop!"—then turning first to Emden and then to us, he would say apologetically, "I beg your pardon for interrupting—but—that table"—we all regarded the table—what was the matter?—"Well—when I come on—where do I put my bag?"

Emden would remonstrate with him. "Let us wait till his entrance, then he would see."

"Yes," Robson objected, "but it will save time *then* if it's arranged *now*."

However willing as were the young authors to humour, even obsequiously, the great little actor (the most wonderful tragic-comedian I have ever seen), Emden, who knew his partner by heart, would not allow him to upset the rehearsal in a scene with which he had nothing to do, especially as Mrs. Emden was occupying the stage at that moment. So Robson bottled himself up and corked himself down for another five or ten minutes, when he had to rehearse his own scene. He was the despair of a stage manager. It was impossible to fix him to any position for two seconds together. He would devise "business," and immediately afterwards forget all about it; then on being reminded, he would roar with laughter as if he were hearing a capital joke for the first time. All the "business" he thoroughly enjoyed; but after a time this repetition and his forgetfulness caused those who were on the stage with him to become very weary of any piece, no matter how humorous it might be.

At last it was produced, and proved one of Robson's greatest successes. The authors never received a bonus from the generous managers, who made hundreds out of the farce for which they had paid only twenty-five pounds. But for an entirely unknown novice in dramatic authorship to have two successful pieces running contemporaneously at the very commencement of his career, was a matter of no small self-congratulation, although,

neither from the one of which he was "part" author, nor from the other of which he was sole author, was the pecuniary benefit so enormous as to warrant him in deciding, there and then, to work solely and only for the stage. How different is it nowadays, when, on the receipts of a really successful piece played in England, America, and the Colonies, a dramatic author can "live happily ever afterwards."

CHAPTER XVIII

IN CHAMBERS—BOURDILLON—A. L. SMITH—
ALFRED WIGAN—MISS HERBERT—*LA DAME
DE ST. TROPEZ*—EMERY—DEWAR—BELMORE
—THE OLD ARUNDEL CLUB—SOME MEMBERS
—CLERKENWELL SESSIONS—LEGAL LIGHTS—
MONTAGU WILLIAMS—KEELEY'S ULTIMATUM
—SERJEANT BODKIN—OLD BAILEY—FOR THE
DEFENCE—BESLEY—LAST APPEARANCES—
WORK—POOR PAY—THOMAS KNOX HOLMES
—COMMITTEE ROOMS—HOPE SCOTT—SAM
POPE—RICHMOND

SO, for a time, I clung to Lincoln's Inn, read at the conveyancer's, Tom Bourdillon's, chambers, with A. L. Smith (afterwards Mr. Justice A. L. Smith) and others, who have, I believe, since become legal luminaries in various lines. Bourdillon was a very old friend of my father's, but took, I believe, full fees for my apprenticeship. My Uncle Arthur and my father were my "sureties" at Lincoln's Inn. In the winter of this year, 1861, Alfred Wigan gave Montagu Williams and myself, a commission to adapt *La Dame de St. Tropez*, which we did, reducing it from, I think, six acts to four.

We arranged it with Mr. and Mrs. Wigan at Brighton; and during rehearsal at the St. James's Mrs. Alfred Wigan did all the stage management. It had to be played with an extravaganza, by William Brough, in which the lovely Miss Herbert appeared as Diana, after having effectively impersonated the suffering wife of Henri Desart (Mr. Alfred Wigan) in our tragic melodrama, which had a long run then and is not yet dead. In this piece played Sam Emery, who was beyond all praise as the villain *Antoine*; young Mr. Dewar, who was afterwards to be *the* one and only *Captain Crosstree* in my *Black Eye'd Susan* burlesque at the Royalty; and George Belmore, a very clever comedian; also a small part, one of the doctors, was played by Mr. Terry, father of the clever Terry family, of whom Ellen Terry is the chief.

The old Arundel Club, as I first knew it, was very Bohemian. I think it was in Essex Street, not Arundel Street, Strand; but am not positive. I remember my first visit. I came introduced by Blanchard, and found upstairs in a very meagrely furnished room some queer-looking men, shabbiness being their chief characteristic, smoking and drinking. They were not dramatic authors, yet somehow they were associated with literature and the drama, but how exactly I have never been able to ascertain. One was a publisher, or related to a publisher; another was a bald-headed solicitor with a theatrical

clientele and a harmless mania for giving imitations of birds, beasts, and fishes on the slightest provocation. Strangers being present, he was, occasionally, amusing. I quite forget his name. There was, from the very first day I can remember the Arundel, an ancient, quite typical Hebrew of the Hebrews in appearance, one Jonas Levy, who, I believe, was very kind to "the profession," and who used to make himself very popular by being always ready to put his name down for "Benefits," or to give handsomely to any theatrical charity. Whenever I saw him, then, or afterwards when he lived in Thanet, where he was a magistrate, and owned Kingsgate Castle, he was always smoking a pipe, or, if not smoking it, he was knocking out the ashes previous to relighting. At this Arundel Club of the time I am describing, shirt sleeves were *de rigueur*, in very hot weather, as the costume suitable for the billiard-room adopted by all, whether they were players or not. I remember another Bohemian club in some Covent Garden hotel where there was no billiard-room, and yet where everyone was in his shirt sleeves. Here spirits and water, pipes and pots, were very much *en evidence*, and the leading members of this club belonged also to the Arundel. The afore-said comic solicitor, Jonas Levy, and Mr. Tegetmier, the field naturalist, were among them. But my first visit to the Arundel there was only one figure that engaged all my attention. I had heard so much

of him as an Etonian and as a dramatist; and I knew his work—this tall, handsome, easy-going Frank Talfourd. The most irregular of irregular livers, and the most careless. Not of a strong constitution, he loved Bohemia and was an utter Bohemian. He was brilliant when in the mood; he was clever at his work, and he wrote his classical burlesques with a finish equal to that of Planché, and with a dramatic “go” in them that was beyond Planché’s powers. Talfourd would dine when others breakfasted, and breakfast when other men dined: he was a night-bird, and in the days of the Broughs, Leicester Buckingham (whose appearance was suggestive of a Ninevite hairdresser on an Egyptian frieze), Byron, Blanchard, John Oxenford, Sterling Coyne, and all the dramatists and journalists of that day, of whom few except John Hollingshead now remain to tell the tale, time was no object, except for those who wrote against it.

Shortly after I met Talfourd here, the club migrated to the corner of Arundel Street, whence it overlooked the Thames. I remember one large room, in three divisions, on the first floor; in the first there was a *table d’hôte* dinner, and afterwards supper; the second was for non-card players, and the third was for card-players. Smoking was permitted at all times and everywhere.

The fact that I was married and had others besides myself to think about, prevented me from

becoming a regular clubbiter, which meant, at that time, a person very "irregular" as regards home-coming habits, and spurred me on to work which left me small leisure for amusement. I still had "before me a divided duty." Law, on the one hand, neither very attractive nor primarily productive; the drama, on the other hand, both. The law meant possibilities *in futuro*, considerably *in futuro*; the drama was "cash down." *Necessitas non habet leges*, and when necessities are immediately relieved by the results of congenial work then *Lex* is out of court.

Not that I didn't make essay. I ate dinners; studied, as I have said, at a conveyancer's; studied at my friend "Little Joyce's" (afterwards Joyce, Q.C.); donned wig and gown; tried my luck at the Clerkenwell Sessions, where Mr. Bodkin, Q.C., was chairman. Here I made the acquaintance of Serjeant Sleigh, of Mr. Ribton, of one of the Lewis's (not George the solicitor, but the barrister), of Mr. Besley, afterwards Q.C., brother-in-law of Leigh Murray, who was one of the handsomest and one of the most finished actors of his time. I met also his brothers Gaston and Ned; Gaston's wife, Miss Hughes, a pretty woman, excellent wife, and charming singer, played in many of my pieces. To them I must not forget to add Harry Poland, now Sir Harry Poland, Q.C., who became chief adviser of the Treasury, Recorder of Dover, and is still "going strong."

Montagu Williams took to the law like a duckling to water, but then his father-in-law, Robert Keeley, refused to give him assistance if he persisted in dramatic authorship, or if he returned to the stage, but promised every help in his power should he stick to the Bar through thick and thin. Mr. Keeley was a member of a convivial club which, meeting at the Café de l'Europe, called itself "The Kaffirs." To this belonged some solicitors in first-rate practice, and one of them, being a great friend of Robert Keeley's, promised him to do his very best for his son-in-law if he would apprentice himself to a leading barrister, and work. Through him Montagu was started, and having read with and devilled for Mr. Holt, Q.C. (likewise an old friend of the Keeleys), he went on his legal road rejoicing. So our ways parted. I had been to a conveyancer's, as I have said, which was simply a waste of time and money; and though a little reading at Joyce's put me on the right track, yet as my increasing commissions for dramatic work left me small time for studying law, I decided to take a brief or two on occasion, and see what I could make of it.

At that time there were, and there may be now for aught I know, a strange set of underhand attorneys doing a low class business at the sessions. They would be retained for some criminal's defence, would receive their fee from him or his friends, and hand the brief to a simple youth in wig and gown,

who would plume himself immensely on being singled out for such a distinction. The case came on. I was one of these thus "briefed" and had to defend somebody or other by cross-examining a witness or two, probably a policeman. Only a few commonplace questions had to be asked, and nervous enough I was about putting them. However, there was some friend at hand to assist, and as the guilt of the prisoner was in nine of such cases out of ten a foregone conclusion, the exhibition of counsel's incompetence was soon over, sentence was pronounced, and the youthful defender of crime looked about in vain for the man who had so confidentially handed him the brief. That man was never seen again. "There was no money in it," and on my asking one of "the old hands," at the Clerkenwell Sessions, if this sort of thing wasn't rather strange, he replied, "Oh dear no! they're a sharp lot about. Everyone has to pass through the fire." Anyhow, I had been thoroughly "done."

Serjeant Bodkin kindly informed my Uncle Theophilus that he would look out for me and see that I was handed "soup." "Soup" meant a guinea from a Court fund which provides that fee for a prosecuting counsel who is then "briefed" by the Court. I think I am right, but I really have forgotten whether the guinea was for prosecution or defence. Whichever it might have been, I got two cases, that is two guineas, and there was precious little

to do for the money, but it was better than sitting there in idleness, and having one's toes trod on by Mr. Ribton, who was a kind of Judge Jeffreys sort of a barrister, ready to bully the chairman or the magistrate, and to undertake the most hopeless criminal defences. He, and those of his kidney, made the Clerkenwell Sessions unendurable to most youngsters who were not prepared for this sort of "roughing it," which was more the "roughing it" of a slave-driver than what is understood by that term in literary and dramatic Bohemia. •

So I tried the Old Bailey; and the Old Bailey tried me. After attending frequently, a brief was given me before the Recorder, Russell Gurney, to defend a woman who, with her husband, was placed in the dock on a charge of "uttering." She *did* "utter" with a vengeance when I arose (thereto instructed by my friend Besley, who was for the prosecution, and who told me what to say for the defence) and wisely pleaded that my client should be released from durance as being a married woman and therefore acting, according to legal theory, under "coercion of her husband."

"Of course, of course," said Russell Gurney. "Officer," he continued, nodding at the gaoler and not addressing me. At this intimation the gaoler, or whoever the official in charge was, opened the dock door, pulled the woman's shawl, and said—

"Come out."

She seemed quite astounded. What! to be separated from her dear husband (such a scoundrelly-looking sort of Bill Sikes as he was!), to be taken away from the partner of her joys and sorrows, from him to whom she had sworn to be true "till death should them part" . . . no, never!—But the turnkey was inexorable; out she must come. "But didn't *he*"—she asked, pointing at me. "Yes, *he* got you off," replied the turnkey, indicating me. "Come out, we can't wait here all day!"

"Officer!" snapped the Recorder, frowning sternly and motioning him to be quick in removing her.

But before a word could be said or a movement made, she had stooped down, undone her shoe, and sent it flying, with a wonderfully good aim (considering the circumstances), at my head. It hit Besley. Accidental justice, as, after all said and done, the suggestion of her innocence came from him. In another second she had disappeared. No one attempted to stop her. I began to apologise for her rather rough manners, when Besley rose. Whereupon the Recorder nodded to me to sit down and hold my tongue, and my friend, monitor, and opponent, Besley, commenced the case for the prosecution.

My part was over; I had played it, and whether paid for it or not I quite forget. The ingratitude of a client was too much for me, and I bade fare-

well to the ancient Bailey, determined henceforth to patronise the Courts at Westminster, where criminals ceased from troubling, and where I should find the proceedings more *civil* than those at Clerkenwell or the Old Bailey.

I couldn't go on circuit, as not only had I no money to do it with, but also I should have had to leave my wife and family of one—and prospects—in London. As for my own relations, well, my nearest relations, except one, as a rule, ignored the fact of my existence, and the “nearer” they were in consanguinity, the “nearer” they were in another sense. I always except my uncle, the “most excellent Theophilus,” who was kindness itself, as far as he understood the matter.

I put in a few fitful appearances at Westminster, where I made the acquaintance of Serjeant Parry, and, after a year or so, had the honour of appearing as junior (in a theatrical case, brought, I think, against the *Glow-worm* newspaper, with which I was connected) to the present Lord Halsbury, then Giffard, Q.C. I was able to explain certain technicalities in theatrical phraseology to him, and so clear did I, in whispers, make my meaning, that he, being quite unable to understand my explanation, put the questions incorrectly, without giving me a chance of setting matters right. My friend and companion, Arthur à Beckett, was called as a witness, and somewhat upset me by asking as he passed me

in court "whether he should play the fool or not?" "For Heaven's sake," I whispered earnestly, "don't be an idiot!" and I am bound to say he wasn't; though the brief scene, between him as witness and me as counsel, was exceptionally amusing to Serjeant Parry, who "led" on the other side. We lost the case; of course Mr. Hardinge Giffard got *his* fees; I didn't. Why I never recovered them I don't know. Perhaps they may be even now accumulating at compound interest. I hope so.

This was, with one or two unimportant exceptions, my last appearance for plaintiff or defendant in wig and gown at Westminster. After this, play-writing and rehearsals took up all my time; for every minute of the day and night was occupied.

In those days very small sums were paid for original pieces, and still smaller for "adaptations." "Runs" rarely exceeded a hundred nights even for the most successful. Boucicault broke the record with his famous *Colleen Bawn*, as did I, afterwards, with my *Black Eye'd Susan* at the Royalty Theatre. But this is "another story," belonging to a later date.

One more legal experience which followed on this—but at what interval I forget.

It was my good fortune to meet Mr. Thomas Knox Holmes. His business was that of Parliamentary Agent, but his pleasure was amateur acting. He was one of the "old Canterbury staggers," and

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES 395

he had been in the Albert Smith pantomime when that dish was set before Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

He was a lithe spare man, with, when I first remember him, "ringlety" hair. He was of rather a Jewish type. He was a first-rate sportsman; hard rider, good boxer, fencer, so forth, and in a general way a "gay dog," of middle age, and a widower. That he should combine the business of a pantaloon, and "general utility" actor, with that of a Parliamentary Agent, struck me as odd; that he should be successful in both, in one as an amateur, in the other as a professional, seemed to me to point out an exceptional line in which perhaps it might be possible for me to succeed. I had been an amateur actor; I had become a professional dramatic author, and I *had* practised at the bar. • Pantomime, however, was not my strong point. My "limitations" were burlesque.

At all events I was a barrister, and when Tom Holmes happened one day to observe to me, "I say, young fellow, aren't you a barrister?" and, after I had admitted the soft impeachment, then went on, "Why don't you try the Committee Rooms?" I was puzzled. Honestly I hadn't the smallest idea of what "Committee Rooms" were. "The Parliamentary Committees," he explained. And he went on to tell me of the enormous fortunes made by Hope Scott and others, who

were then practising, and whose names were seldom heard outside these rooms, where they were engaged mainly on railway cases. "Once get in *there*, young man," remarked my worthy mentor, "and your fortune's made."

He said that he, personally, would "do something for me," if I would attend to the business, and almost immediately afterwards he asked—

"Isn't Henry Cameron a relation of yours?"

"Certainly he is," I replied, though at the moment I couldn't exactly fix him in his place on the proper branch of the family tree.

"He's with Pritt & Grubb," quoth Holmes.

"Is he?" I returned, much interested, but without the slightest idea of what sort of people "Pritt & Grubb" were, except that they had comic names.

"Parliamentary Agents," further explained Tom Holmes, perceiving my difficulty. "Now," he continued, "Cameron's *your* man. He'll have a capital position in the firm in time"—he was quite right, I am delighted to say—"and *he* can give you a start *now*; then afterwards—d'y'e see?"

I grasped the idea. The next move was to see Henry Cameron, which I did. I arrayed myself in wig and gown, hunted him up in the Committee Rooms, impressed our cousinship upon him (I had not seen him or spoken to him for about ten years), and he (being nobody in particular at that time himself)

kindly promised to do whatever he could to assist me if I came regularly into the Committee Rooms.

I attended. The hours were easy. The cases were dull, but occasionally the counsel and the witnesses were very amusing. But what took my fancy after the rough experience of the Old Bailey, was that the proceedings were so pleasant, so gentlemanly, so easy, so polite. The committee were gentlemen, with apparently not much to do, who had kindly consented to sit in a row like an extended set of Christy Minstrels, only without the instruments, at a table covered with maps, plans, papers, and so forth. It was a sort of drawing-room proceeding. The barristers were in wig and gown, and well do I remember handsome Hope Scott, Q.C., and pleasant Sam Pope, Q.C., of daily increasing rotundity. A very good "all-round man" was Sam Pope. Then there was Holroyd, doing less business, but progressive. Henry Cameron gave me a railway case to look into. I took it away with me; but once at home I had to sit down to some piece I was writing at the moment, some burlesque that required all my attention, as I had to finish it by a certain time in order to receive "a sum on account," which, alas! I could not afford to forego.

So I went into the Committee Rooms with this great railway case. Heard Hope Scott and others; heard Pope; had sandwiches with Henry Cameron; exchanged amusing stories with one or

two of the counsel in a small way of business whom I knew, and who all corroborated Tom Holmes' advice as to its being "a first-rate business when once you got your nose in." Henry Cameron and Tom Holmes gave me the straight tip, but my nose wouldn't follow. So that came to an end. I had to work to live; I couldn't live in order to work.

So, regretfully I admit, I bade adieu to the Committee Rooms, to which for some time during the summer I used regularly to come up from Richmond, where we had now taken a house in Marlborough Road, two-thirds up the hill and within a few minutes' walk of the Park. London for business; country for work and recreation; and as closely as possible to this as a sort of motto I have all along been true.

While living at Richmond, I made the acquaintance of "Tim" Moore, whose name had been to me, many years before, almost as familiar a household word as that of Albert Smith, Shirley Brooks, and their *co-æquales*. He was a journalist by practice, and, I believe, an "accountant" by profession. At all events, he had some mysterious office in buildings close by Waterloo Bridge. He was a most amusing companion *en voyage*, that is, between Putney, where he used to get into the train, and Waterloo Station, where we both got out. Sometimes Rivers Wilson (who, with his sweetly pretty wife, occupied a

charming house at Richmond where now stands a big hotel) was of our party, on his way to the Foreign Office, and a very pleasant party we were,—Rivers, Tim Moore, Holroyd (then practising in "The Committee Rooms"), and myself. But Tim Moore was the life and soul of that short run into town.

"I've had a trouble with a stupid sort of carpenter chap," he told us one morning. "You see, my office is a bit out o' the way, and 'tisn't everyone in London that mounts up to the second floor to consult Mr. T. Moore the accountant."

"Got a brass plate up, haven't you?" asked Holroyd.

"I've got it up down below," answered Tim; "and another at my door, to catch the eye of anybody who's ascending, you see."

"Well?"

"Well," he resumed, "I didn't have either of 'em there at first. But after a time, when I found business not coming in as it ought, and lots o' people going past my door, as they oughtn't, up and down stairs, I began to consider the matter, and I said 'Tim, my boy, you must advertise! If ye don't blow a trumpet—and that your own—outside the door, who the deuce is to know you're inside waiting for business?'"

So far the court was with him.

"Well," he continued, "I cast about, and, just as I used to tell Albert,—though heaven knows *he* didn't want the advice, though Thackeray did, and wouldn't

act on it when he got it,—you must ‘advertise! advertise! advertise!’ in the largest letters possible.”

“That advice is all very well for a show,” objected Rivers; “but in business”—

“Nonsense, my dear boy! All the world’s a fair and every business in it, from fried fish up to Foreign Office, is a ‘show’ in it. Yours at the F. O. is a big booth, mine’s a one-horse affair. Anyway, to keep either of ‘em going, you must have the public confidence, and how are ye to get that if the public doesn’t know where you’re to be found when wanted?”

“True. But about the carpenter,” I reminded him.

“I’m coming to that. He came to me, when I sent for him. Says I to him, ‘See here now, d’ye know a man who can fix up for me a brass tablet with my name and address on it, and my hours of business, all printed as plain as a pikestaff, put up here at the front door, and another on the landing where everyone will see it?’ ‘I do sir,’ says he. ‘I’ll undertake to have it done for you in a couple of days.’ I just wanted to see that he understood the commission, and so I put him through his facings. ‘What’ll you put at the top?’ I asked him. ‘Your name, sir,’ says he; ‘and on the next line I’ll have clearly engraved that your office is on the second floor.’ ‘Good!’ said I. ‘But, on second thoughts, just put at the top, first of all, Accountant.’ ‘I will, sir,’ he said. ‘That’s to tell ‘em what your

business is.' Just so; and then I told him to state the hours clearly. I'm always there punctually by ten, I told him, and I don't leave till three sharp. This he understood. Would I have both plates the same? he wanted to know. No; on second thoughts it was enough for the one at the door to indicate merely 'Accountant,' then my name and the *étage* where I was to be found. The plates arrived a week or so ago, brightly polished, printing quite clear, just the sort of thing to attract attention."

"And they did, eh?" we asked. •

"Rather!" replied Tim; "but not quite in the way I had anticipated. You must know I always keep my door a bit open so as to catch any passing remarks on the staircase; then, when a customer is in doubt, I can appear and say to him, 'I'm the party you're in search of.' Well, on the first day of my new brass plate I heard several persons going up and down, and everyone of them seemed to be immensely delighted with some joke or another, or mightily pleased with themselves, I couldn't say which it was. *But no one came in.* Devil a word of inquiry was there. Next day, *même jeu*: much laughing, some whispering, considerable shuffling of feet, and on my appearance at the door to see what the fun was all about, away they scuttled,—for it was quite a small crowd,—like rats at the sight of a terrier. 'Now,' said I to myself, 'what the deuce does this mean at all?' Reflecting on the matter,

I came to the conclusion that the office-boy had been up to some of his monkey tricks. Sternly I summoned the wretched caitiff to my presence on the landing. Then I asked him, 'Do you know what all these people have been laughing at? You heard them, I suppose?' Oh yes; 'he 'ad 'eard 'em'; and thereupon he began to smile. 'What do ye see to laugh at, you booby?' I asked, for I was beginning to be very angry. 'That!' answers the boy quickly enough, pointing to the brass plate. 'Well,' I returned severely, 'what is there to laugh at there? Read it.' So he read aloud the following distich:—

"Mr. Moore,
Second floor,
Office Hours,
Ten till Four.'

Then he grinned all over his face. Everybody had thought I had put this up by way of a joke!"

We all laughed heartily, but Moore pretended to take it very seriously.

"My dear boys," he protested, "it was ruin. Who'd come to a comic accountant who advertised himself in this kind of pantomime way?"

"What did you do?" we asked.

"Listen, boys, I'm telling you. I sent for the carpenter. 'Look at that!' I said. He did: read it, smiled, and observed quietly, 'It *is* funny; isn't it, sir?' 'Funny be . . .! no matter. You must alter it at once. Take it down and bring it back to—

morrow.' Then he began to remonstrate and to lay the blame on *me*! 'You see, Mr. Moore,' he said, quite apologetically, 'that is your name,—and this is your office "on the second floor," and your hours are just what I've put, sir.' His statement was perfectly correct. There was 'no denigin' of it.' So I told him I didn't care what he did as long as he altered and amended the blessed thing; and I left him puzzling his head as he produced a screw-driver previous to removing the plate. And how do you think he altered it," asked Tim, just as the train was "slowing down" at Waterloo.

We couldn't guess.

"This way," he continued, answering his own question. "The plate was up there yesterday, and the man was just fixing it when I arrived. 'Done it?' I asked. 'I have, sir,' says he triumphantly. 'It won't be an expensive job to you now, as I have only had to re-engrave one word. There!' said he, pointing to his work as if he were the President of the Royal Academy exhibiting a *chef-d'œuvre* to royalty. Then I read—

" 'ACCOUNTANT'S OFFICE.

Mr. Moore,

Second floor'—

" 'That can't be changed,' observed the carpenter. And, admitting the fact, I continued—

" 'Office Hours,

Ten to Five.'

And the ingenious carpenter looked at me and said, knowingly, 'That's done it, Mr. Moore.'" And before we had done laughing at his story, Tim had vanished. He knew how to make his point with a good exit.

That is one among the many of Tim Moore's stories. He spoke with a slight stutter, which added to the effect of his narrative. He had stories about his own stuttering. He would tell inimitably how he was cured of it, and how one morning, on coming across a perfect nest of stutterers in a baker's shop, the habit came back to him again worse than ever, suddenly, like a fit of ague; and how he once more overcame it, and now rarely stuttered, living un-stutteringly ever afterwards. With the exception of Johnnie Dean, Father Healy, P.P., and Lord Rathmore (who, by the way, has just the slightest possible stutter), Tim Moore was quite the most amusing Irishman I ever met. Robert O'Hara, Q.C., was not very far off as a *raconteur* with a rich brogue.

CHAPTER XIX

YOUNG TOM HOOD—SATURDAY NIGHT CONTRIBUTORS — *FUN* — DINNERS — DIFFICULTIES — BRILLIANT IDEA—INTERVIEW—PROPRIETOR'S TEETH—REJECTION—A VISITOR—CRITICISM INVITED — ARGUMENT — READING-VOW — RECONSIDERATION — ODD COINCIDENCE — FIRST MEETING—MARK LEMON—A RIDE—DELIGHT — RETURN HOME—*MOKEANNA*—UNEXPECTED SUCCESS — MR. BRADBURY — THACKERAY — ARTISTS COLLABORATING

IT was just at this time that H. J. Byron with others started *Fun*, which was outwardly to look as like *Punch* as legally possible, to be published on a Wednesday, and its price should be a penny, which would suit the thousands of purchasers who might think before they laid out threepence. Some years before this, as I have already mentioned, three pictures of mine had been published in *Punch*; to write for it had never for a moment entered my head. Indeed, apart from my play-writing, I had done no regular literary work, except at various Christmas times, some stories for *Tom Hood's Annual*, occasionally during the year a story or two for magazines,

and twice, if I remember right, I had been entrusted with getting together contributors and writing the introduction and finish to a Christmas Number. I had only written one serious drama, and that had been intended for Robson, who accepted it, read the first act, rehearsed his own part with me privately in his dressing-room, but, alas! died before it was completed. This was subsequently *The Deal Boatman*, which, first played by Belmore at Drury Lane, under F. B. Chatterton's management, has travelled about the country and gone pretty well everywhere since.

I cannot be absolutely certain as to whether "young Tom Hood" or Henry J. Byron was editor of *Fun* when I joined the staff. I am almost sure it was Byron, as I think it was to him I timidly entrusted my first contributions to that paper in manuscript. But of one thing I am sure, that it was Byron who encouraged me, and who intensely appreciated whatever I did at that time. Of Hood in connection with *Fun* I do not call to mind anything; but of him as editor of quite a different sort of weekly, entitled *Saturday Night*, I have a distinct and vivid recollection. He lived within a mile of Sidney Street, Brompton, when I was in my first lodgings in London, and I think his rooms were just out of Brompton Road, in a street the corner of which is now a part of Harrod's stores. At Tom Hood's rooms we were entertained by himself

and "Mrs. Tom" with a simple supper, plenty of spirits and water, while every one of us came provided with the necessary pipe and tobacco. Then we—George Rose, Jeff Prowse, Tom Archer, and, I think, W. S. Gilbert, with Tom Robertson and one or two others whom I cannot recall—sat round a table, Tom Hood being chairman; and at the first "symposium" we discussed the subjects on which we were to write, and at the next symposium we read aloud, each his own paper, to the band of brothers listening! Need I say how delighted everybody individually was with everybody else's work? *Cela va sans dire*. To think what a row there would have been had I denounced George Rose's story as stupid, or had he objected to mine as dreadfully dull, and had we both expressed our utter contempt for Tom Hood's verse or story, or had Prowse sneered at W. S. Gilbert's verse, and had the latter retaliated by denouncing Jeff Prowse's vulgar attempts at humour! There would have been an end of *Saturday Night*! It would have been "Saturday night at sea" with a vengeance! But without this "short way" with it, the weekly paper came to an end very rapidly, and but for these exceptional meetings (I cannot recall being present at more than three of them), I should not have remembered that such a "weekly" as *Saturday Night* had ever existed.

At all events when *Fun* was started and as I came

across Byron, W. S. Gilbert, Jeff Prowse, Tom Hood, Tom Archer, George Rose ("Sketchley"), E. L. Blanchard, Clement Scott, William Brough, and others at the Arundel, it occurred to me that perhaps I might join their merry party. With my first work for the paper Byron, some four years my senior in drama and light literature, was eminently pleased, and from that moment I wrote for the paper regularly, becoming much interested in its success. Hearing that *Punch* was carried on by the contributors meeting together at a weekly dinner, the example struck me as a capital one for *Fun* to follow. But unfortunately Mr. M'Lean, the proprietor (a looking-glass seller and manufacturer in Fleet Street), was of a "frugal mind" and did not see himself as "standing the racquet" for the proposed banquets. So we determined to make the dinner a regular Wednesday affair; we would dine at a tavern near Temple Bar, in a private room of course, and the dinner should be served at a moderate cost, at so much ahead, each one paying for his "consommation." We began well and merrily: Byron in the chair. Matt Morgan was one of our artists, sharp and clever as a draughtsman, who might have gone far had he been properly taken in hand. Brunton was another, and there was yet another whose name escapes my memory; he was a distinct copyist of Leech; clever, but lacking originality. The dinners were cheerful; we were all in high spirits; we didn't sit too late,



The Grand All-Rounder

SKETCH ON A SHEET OF WHITING-PAPER SENT ME IN A LETTER
BY SIR JOHN GUILLET F.R.S. PRESIDENT OF THE
ROYAL WATER-COLOUR SOCIETY

and we looked in at the Arundel *en route* for home. I say "the dinners," but I quite forget how many of them there were. As each one paid for himself, there was no obligation laid upon him to attend, and so after a few full meetings the attendance became irregular; and when it dwindled to a small party of three, the landlord thought that a room of less size would suit, and that to provide a special dinner, however plain and simple, for a party of eight or ten persons, of whom it was as likely as not that only three would put in an appearance, was neither profitable nor encouraging. So after a few months' trial it was dropped, and the band of brothers was dispersed. Gilbert began his inimitable "Bab Ballads" in *Fun*, and Jeff Prowse's sporting articles, written by an imaginary "tout" or a "Bookie," were admirable. There was excellent light work done in *Fun* in those early days.

At this period I frequently saw *Reynolds' Miscellany*, and much did I admire the dashing pictures by that master of his craft John Gilbert (afterwards Sir John Gilbert, President of the Royal Water Colour Society), which illustrated its current sensational story. I remember how after being from very early boyhood a sincere admirer of *Jack Hinton*, *Charles O'Malley*, and a few others of Charles Lever's most rollicking stories, I had been delighted with Thackeray's inimitable parodies of them, as of the style of other then well-known

novelists. Here in *Reynolds' Miscellany* was the very material to work on! Gilbert's dashing illustrations to some story caught my eye in the window of the office where the current number of *Reynolds'* was sold, and, after supplying myself with sufficient material, I took it home with me to Richmond and at once started upon it. I wrote some pages, and the next day I called on Mr. M'Lean at his looking-glass shop in Fleet Street, over which was the *Fun* office, and laid my plan of campaign before him.

He was standing at his desk "totting up," and received me with a perfect Carker-like smile and the usual "invisible soap" action that is a necessary part of the polite shop-walker's stock in trade. His manner reminded me of Spankie, the then well-known tart purveyor "at the wall" of Eton, when he used to salute a small nobleman, aged eleven, with his most unctuous "And what for you, my little lord, this morning, sir?" So Mr. M'Lean. Except as a suave man of business, I knew very little about him, but up to that moment I had certainly been under the very natural impression that, on the principle of "who drives fat oxen should himself be fat," the proprietor of *Fun* would himself be funny, or, if not funny in himself, at least "the cause of fun" in others by appreciatively paying for the witticisms they produced. In less than ten minutes I was disillusioned. He heard me read

the opening part to him. I expected him to smile, then to grin, then to laugh outright, and finally to exclaim—

“By jove *that* is good. There must be a special price for this.” Then to the cashier, “Quick, bring the cheque-book!”

But nothing of the kind happened.

He listened and he smiled; but it was the same smile he had had on his inexpressibly irritating countenance before I had commenced to read to him. It never expanded to a grin, although he made a point of showing his teeth, whose whiteness and brightness quite illuminated his imperturbable visage. He never chuckled; he rubbed his hands and slightly coughed; that was all. I stopped reading, and paused for some observation; all that came from him was “Ahem.”

Feeling the silence awkward, I explained to him *how* I intended to continue it, how so and so was going to happen, and how it would become more and more convulsively humorous as the story proceeded. Finally, how it would be the very thing for *Fun*, and indeed be the making of that paper. And again I came to a full stop. He had evidently arrived at his own conclusion.

“Ahem!” he commenced, showing his splendid set of teeth, much resembling those to be seen in a second-class dentist’s window, and clearing his throat, “I er—quite—er—appreciate your bringing this to

me,—ahem—but—it's—in fact—not the sort of thing for *us*,—it won't do."

I was aghast. "Won't do!" I exclaimed.

"No," he repeated, always smiling blandly and drying his hands. "It won't do. It's not the sort of thing."

I wasn't going to argue with a man who I considered to be acting like an idiot, who, dead against his own interests, was chucking away the biggest chance of his life, that is, as proprietor of a comic paper, not as a mirror merchant,—no—reasoning would be wasted on such an individual, and though at first highly indignant, and inclined to throw expressions of scorn and contempt in his obtrusive teeth, yet I parted from him, more in sorrow than in anger, feeling that his treatment of my offer had never been equalled since the Roman king rejected the Sibyl's books (and even he was wiser than M'Lean, as he thought better of it, and saved the last volume from the flames), and that to have, there and then, prophesied the ruin of the house and journalistic property of M'Lean would have been the right thing to do. Yet I only pocketed the MS. with the implied insult, and, aware that I was cutting myself adrift from *Fun* (which at all events was worth a "something regular" per week, however little), I bade him farewell, as he, always smiling blandly, accompanied me to the front door, opened it and saw me, still vividly conscious

of his teeth, safely into Fleet Street. What was to be done? No one was at hand to consult. I could not find H. J. Byron, nor Prowse, nor W. S. Gilbert, nor the wise and experienced E. L. Blanchard. It was before midday, and the Arundel Club was only just recovering itself from its last night's carouse and was beginning to clean up and trim itself for the day. I remembered that my friend Fred. Collins Wilson had accepted our invitation to Richmond, or rather he had proposed and *we* had accepted taking him on his own invitation, as he used to take us at his country place at Theobald's on our own invitation, and that, in my absence, he had probably arrived. So I hurried back; found he had not yet turned up; confided to my wife that M'Lean was what Dogberry wished himself to be written down as, and by luncheon-time our guest appeared. After dinner that night I diffidently proposed to read my *chef-d'œuvre* to my good friend, "whose opinion I valued" (this, of course, is the usual formula when an author commences to be a trifle uncertain as to the merit of his own work), and who "might advise me what course to take," although I did not imagine, at that time, that Fred. Wilson, who was not acquainted with any literary people except the future laureate (then only a minor poet in a very small way), possessed the least influence in the world of light literature. I was therefore a bit

surprised when, after he had most cheerfully accepted my offer on condition that I should read aloud while he smoked his meerschaum and sipped his grog, he said—

“Alfred Austin read some things over to me before he published.”

“Indeed,” I calmly observed, not much interested, as at that time I was only slightly acquainted with the future Laureate’s name.

“Yes,” continued my philosopher and friend—
“Yes, and it was of the greatest use to him, as it enabled him to correct a lot and to polish them up and so forth.”

I felt it necessary to explain that what I was going to read to him was not poetry—in fact nothing serious at all, only a sort of burlesque sensational story.

“I don’t care about burlesque,” he remarked, quietly smoking.

“But you used to play in burlesques and in nothing else at Cambridge,” I objected.

“Quite,” he replied; “but that’s an altogether different thing.”

I pointed out to him that Thackeray had done burlesque novels and romances.

“Ah! I daresay,” was the reply; “I can’t read Thackeray. And,” after a meditative pause, “I can’t say I care very much for Dickens.”

Here was an upheaval!

"However," he continued in a consolatory tone, and more as if he were, between the puffs of his pipe, talking to himself than addressing me. "Of course *you* are neither Thackeray nor Dickens— I admitted it, and began to cheer up on hearing these names in connection with my own. "Neither Thackeray nor Dickens; and you know how I like the pieces you have already done for the stage"— I was gratified, and began to feel brighter, happier, and, generally, cleverer.

"But," he went on, "of course *this*," and he waved his pipe towards my manuscript, "is not a play, which is quite a different matter."

This depressed me again.

"I'm ready," he said, "if you are."

So with a glass of something handy and a pipe, which having started in full blow was soon allowed to die out, I began to read.

When we retired for the night, that is at about two a.m., I parted company with him, swearing he should never enter my house again, and he, standing at the door with his pipe in one hand and a bed candlestick in the other, vowed that no power on earth should prevent him leaving *the very next morning*!

He was a very late riser. I was not quite so late. I went to my study, and calmly and deliberately thrust the entire manuscript into the fire,

watched it until it was reduced to ashes, and *then sat down to begin my work all over again!*

Frankly I owned to myself that M'Lean hadn't been altogether wrong, and that Fred. Wilson had been absolutely right when, the previous night, with the last glass of whisky and water and the last pipe, he had thus expressed his opinion perfectly clearly—

"It *may* be very funny, but it doesn't make *me* laugh."

So we met at lunch all the better friends for our disagreement of the night before, and still better when I owned that on the whole I thought he was right, and that I had burnt it.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, as awfully shocked as if he had been accessory to a crime. "You shouldn't have done *that*! There is so much in it that"—

"That was worth burning," I interrupted; "and so it has gone. I'm going to rewrite it."

I do not remember whether he received this piece of information with pleasure or not. Anyway he encouraged me, and then he said, much to my surprise—

"You know my cousins are the Blacketts."

"Hurst and Blackett, the publishers?" I inquired.

"Exactly," he answered, "And if I can be of use to you with anything *in their* line, you let me know."



A SKETCH OF JOHN CHITTLEY WITH AN OLD QUINCY
 ALLEGES OF SOME DETAILS OF CORRESPONDENCE

I thanked him much.

"And, by the way," he said, "I quite forgot, but it is odd that you should have just now had this break with the *Fun* people, for I suppose it is a break, eh?"

I admitted that it might perhaps be regarded in that light, and asked why he had considered the circumstances "odd just now"?

"Well," he resumed, "Mark Lemon"—I pricked up my ears—"is George Meke's, that's my brother-in-law, tenant down at Crawley. Mister Lemon"—I had never heard him spoken of as 'Mister Lemon' before—it seemed so intensely respectful, and made of Mark Lemon, ever associated in my idea with jollification, wit, humour, and *Punch*, such a staid, decorous, and eminently respectable person!—"Mister Lemon, you know, has a cottage—two or three cottages knocked together at Crawley, charmingly pretty—and he and George are on the very best terms. I often meet him there."

Really! Bless me, how little I had known of even my own most intimate friend!

"And," he continued, "when I was down at George's the other day Mr. Lemon asked me all about you."

"About *me*!" I exclaimed, genuinely surprised.

"Yes; he said he had read your *Dido*, and had advised Miss Wyndham to play it"—(good Heavens!)—"and that since then he has, so he said, been

"watching all you've done; and he thought it likely you might do something for *Punch*."

I was thunderstruck. I seized the moment—the *momentum unde pendet*—and *then* I did sit down to rewrite what I had destroyed. Most carefully I did it. Never was I so painstaking; not a line, not a word, but I revised it and polished it over and over again until *I thought it would do*. But not again, no, *never again* have I proposed to read any work of mine to a friend, no matter how friendly; no, nor invited a friend's opinion on anything I have ever written, literary or dramatic. My experience is that, as a rule, an author is not at his best when attempting to read aloud his own work, and that his amateur audience is either foolishly critical or stupidly indulgent. A professional reading is quite another matter, being one of business. In this case the result was perfectly satisfactory, though at the cost of a temporary rupture of amicable relations.

Then I wrote to Mark Lemon.

The next day I received a letter from him making an appointment at the office in Bouverie Street.

I was unpunctual, and as I was walking along the Strand in the direction of Fleet Street I caught sight of a very big man filling up a hansom, with the doors open, waving one very large hand to me, while with the other he jerked up the trap-door and instructed the driver to pull up to the kerb.

I began to apologise; "train late," etc.

"I was leaving the office rather earlier than usual," quoth Mark Lemon, smiling genially, as much as to say "Don't bother your invention about excuses." "And I haven't much time to spare."

Was I to lose this chance? I could make no suggestion. He caught sight of the MS. in my hand.

"Jump in," he said, "I'm going to the Tavistock, Covent Garden, and we can talk on the way."

I accepted with alacrity. It was not easy to find the necessary space in a cab beside Mark Lemon, but I contrived to squeeze myself in, and he sat as triangularly as a very stout man could who hasn't an angle visible about him. A "thorough all-round man" was Mark Lemon.

"Now," said he at once, "tell me all about it."

I told him I had come up intending to read it to him.

He put that suggestion aside with a wave of the hand.

"Just *tell* me," he said.

I did, as briefly as possible, attempting to explain the essential points, and feeling all the while wretchedly conscious of omitting every single thing that would have ensured its success—in fact, as it struck me at the time, my description of it was simply a bungle, an utter failure!

I felt inclined to stop the cab, beg him a hundred thousand pardons for wasting his time, and then

to return home, and give up everything generally. What was my surprise when he smiled all over his face, slapped my knee heartily with his broad hand, and exclaimed—

“Bravo!” and then as if struck by a brilliant idea (as it was), he cried in his rich husky voice, and in the most jovial manner, “We’ll have it illustrated! I’ll get the artists to burlesque themselves! Gilbert will do it! And I’ll get Jack Millais! and Hablot K. Brown! It’s first rate!! When shall I have the copy?”

“Here it is!”

“Capital! We’ll have it set up at once—and”
here he became excessively confidential, as beaming with the brilliancy of the notion, he said to me in a confidential tone, “We’ll have it set up as a facsimile of the *London Journal* or *Reynolds*!! Mum! not a word to a soul. I’ve got your address; the proofs will be posted. Good-bye for the present!” And out I got just at the corner of the Piazza, and it was indeed a joyous and light-hearted man who went down to Richmond as quickly as possible to communicate to his wife the unexpectedly good news, and to tell his friend and adviser.

Mokeanna duly appeared in *Punch*, February 21, 1863. It created a sensation. In the first place, so well had Mark Lemon kept the secret, that the senior partner, Mr. Bradbury, who, having been invalided for some little time, had been unable

to attend at the office, on receiving his early copy of *Punch* on the Sunday previous to its date of issue, was utterly horrified, on opening it, to see, as he thought, the first page of the *London Journal* (or of *Reynolds*, for I forget which it was) appearing as the first page of *Punch*! The error was just possible, as the *London Journal* (or *Reynolds*) was at that time printed by Messrs. Bradbury & Evans. Without more ado, up to town came Mr. Bradbury, that Sunday morning, went to Bouverie Street, and was for stopping the issue, when, in answer to his message, down came "Pater" Evans, equally astonished, and then Mark Lemon, from the Tavistock Hotel, who soon explained the joke, though it was some time before Mr. Bradbury could enter into the humour of the proceeding, and, not until the new serial had reached its second number and had made a decided hit, did the senior partner in the firm appreciate what he had considered as a rather risky departure from the beaten track.

My old friend Mr. W. Bodham Donne, congratulating me on my success, recounted how he had asked Thackeray, whom he happened to meet, if this novelty proceeded from his pen? Thackeray himself, the very Prince of Parodists, in denying this soft impeachment, was good enough to say that "he wished he had written it." This was more than a feather in my cap; it was a plume.

Mark Lemon had carried out his original design, and *Mosanna* was illustrated by Sir John Gilbert, Hablot K. Brown, Charles Keene, Du Maurier, and Millais, in the genuine spirit of burlesque.

